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ABSTRACT

The Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) program was designed to provide on-site vocational experiences for high-school youth in order to promote: (1) career development skills and knowledge; (2) self-knowledge--interests, abilities, and values; (3) reading skills; (4) problem solving skills; (5) oral communication; (6) writing skills; (7) interpersonal skills; (8) basic quantitative skills; and (9) maturation skills. This ethnographic evaluation of the EBCE program in Olney High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, describes what it is like to be a student in the program, what changes occur in student behavior and self image, how actual outcomes compare to the program plan, and what constitutes success in the program. The major problems observed were the inadequate coordination between elements of the program, the lack of discernable grading standards, and the lack of a feeling of community or group membership. The program seemed to work well for self directed and self motivated students and not so well for others. The main successes of the program were the students' increased self knowledge, their knowledge of the city, and to some extent, their knowledge about careers. The program staffing, physical environment, and activities are described, as well as the experiences and attitudes of several of its students. (CTM)

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# THE ACADEMY FOR CAREER EDUCATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION

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EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S FINAL REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S FINAL REPORTS ON THE
EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ethnography is not yet a staple item in evaluation studies. For that reason we take the opportunity offered by a preface to indicate why an ethnographic investigation figures so prominently among the third-party studies of Experience-Based Career Education.

The term "ethnography" lies within the discipline of anthropology. At its simplest, an ethnography is a description of the way people "behave" in a particular culture or environment. The emphasis is on an holistic view. In the instance of the EBCE studies, the focus of investigation is on the participants (students, staff, and others) at four development sites. Particular reference is made in the EBCE ethnographies as to how the participants behave and, to some extent, why they behave in that way.

In the study of Experience-Based Career Education, this focus was invaluable. Many features of EBCE and the EBCE objectives were not amenable to measurement by instruments which existed before this study began or which could be constructed within the duration of the third-party study. On the other hand, an ethnographer, living and working as a participant-observer at the EBCE development sites, could provide a detailed description of what was actually happening in the operation of the four systems, indicate what was working well and where some problems still seemed to exist, and describe (through case study material) the rewards and satisfactions that came to those who participated in the program.

One of the questions that the ethnographers were directed to investigate in their studies was: What is the real program like in comparison to the paper version? By contrasting their own observations with written program planning documentation, the ethnographers were able to respond to this question. We believe that such observations and contrasts will be of particular value to those who may be interested in adopting or replicating any of the four EBCE systems. However, we caution readers against interpreting these discussions of discrepancies between intended and actual operations of program features as meaning that all discrepancies have negative consequences, or occur as a result of inadequate program administration. In experimental programs such as these, it is useful to have information about the evolution of program features, and each change and deviation from the

originally planned treatment should be examined on its own merits. Discrepancies can be positive, negative, or neutral.

If the project director's original expectations have been met, the description is provided in such a way that each reader becomes his own evaluator. The ethnographies are not evaluations or evaluative in the sense that is customarily meant. In describing what is going on, both the intended and unintended structures, processes, and outcomes, and in studying what it is that participants expect or feel ought to be happening, the ethnographer provides a glass through which potential adoptors and others can view -- even though darkly -- these educational systems. The description is intended to allow the reader to decide for himself how he would evaluate what he sees.

Readers will immediately perceive that the work of an ethnographer is highly subjective, and that there is a potentiality for bias. The ethnographers themselves have tried to protect against bias by utilizing a number of informants, selecting them to give varying points of view, and checking information and sources of information against each other. For example, the case study students reviewed and approved the case studies about themselves before the ethnographies were released. We have submitted drafts of the ethnographies to the developing agencies themselves for criticism and content verification, and have responded to their criticisms when content could not be verified through the field notes of the ethnographer.

In addition, we submitted early drafts to a panel of distinguished educational anthropologists for critiques, and corrected the drafts when conclusions rendered in the reports were not supported by sufficient documentation. The panel included Dr. Robert B. Textor, Professor of Education and Anthropology, Stanford University; Dr. Judith G. Goode, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Temple University; and Dr. Harry F. Wolcott, Professor of Education and Anthropology, Center for Educational Policy and Management, University of Oregon. Dr. Textor also assisted us in the early planning for the use of ethnographic material in the total third-party investigation. We are grateful to these panel members for their technical assistance, and to the panel and the anthropologists who studied the four EBCE systems for helping us develop new insights into the evaluation of educational programs.

Reginald Corder
Project Director

January 1976

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Anthropologists, like other social scientists, are concerned with explaining the social behavior of humans. In their use of the concept of culture and insistence upon holism and in their use of a participant-observation research methodology, anthropologists are afforded a unique perspective and a set of tools eminently useful in identifying the significant variables underlying human interactions. Insights provided through a study of these variables have practical application to the concerns of contemporary educators. School failures are failures at successful interactions and can only be remedied or avoided when the particulars of the interactions are clearly understood. Likewise, successful educational innovations can be accurately replicated only when underlying variables and their functional relationships are accurately identified.

To get at the factors underlying human social interaction, one of the concepts most useful to anthropology is the notion of culture. To anthropologists, culture refers to the complex and unconscious set of rules an individual acquires in his socialization into a group. Culture consists of a set of beliefs (notions as to how things are), values, normative standards for interpersonal interactions, and sets of techniques and skills for exploiting environments and communicating.

In a given society all individuals share enough of these rules to make their behaviors mutually comprehensible, predictable, and acceptable, thereby assuring at least a modicum of compatibility. Subgroups within the larger society may share perceptibly more rules. This sharing of more rules is one characteristic of a subculture.

When members of disparate subcultures are unexpectedly thrust into intense contact, as inevitably happens in the development of innovative social institutions, behaviors are frequently not mutually comprehensible or acceptable. This is a major dynamic of social disharmony and an important pressure to conservatism.

While explication and analysis of the underlying rules constituting a culture is vital to understanding social behavior, anthropologists proceed on the further assumption that these rules operate in a finely balanced

system and that no aspect of culture makes sense without some understanding of the whole. This commitment to holism is one of the reasons why anthropologists have concentrated their efforts on the analysis of small scale societies, and one of the reasons why the discipline provides a valuable perspective on the processes of education and schooling.

Both education and schooling are cultural processes. Both can be understood through an analysis of the complex set of rules that underlie them--rules which participants must acquire and which are realized in behavior. However, both entail a complex interplay of sets of rules working in concert, and, in modern urban settings, both involve the interaction of people belonging to different subcultures. Understanding any aspect of the process thus requires some grasp of all the variables.

An ethnographic approach which attempts to describe and analyze the underlying culture of a school and the nature of the relationships between its components can provide valuable insights to those concerned either with replication or with analyzing the bases for successes and failures.

## Participant-Observation

A cornerstone of ethnographic endeavor is the use of participant-observation to gather data for the analysis of cultures. There are several reasons why ethnographic studies must be based on data collected through this technique. First, anthropologists are concerned with describing the unconscious. Test instruments, interviews, and experimental designs are of limited value in getting this information. The anthropologist believes the unconscious can be discovered only by observing behavior and then abstracting from this behavior, or by participating fully in the life of informants so that what is in their heads will to some degree be shared.

There are obviously a number of problems to be overcome in conducting participant-observation research. A basic problem never completely solved is that of finding a role in the group being studied that the investigator can fill comfortably and profitably. The participant-observer will be, by definition, an outsider in most cases--a role which itself imposes severe limitations. However, with persistence, sensitivity, and some good luck it is usually possible for the ethnographer to find

a participant-observer role compatible with his own personal attributes. The quality of an anthropologist's research is critically dependent upon the assuming of a productive role, and on being sensitive to that role's advantages and limitations.

Another problem inherent in the participant-observation approach is that of verification of conclusions. Without going into detail, the several precautions taken in this report and the research it describes to ensure verification are worth listing. First, since the anthropologist fieldworker was to be the primary data gathering instrument, care was taken that this person be qualified in terms of training and sensitivity. Second, the presentation of conclusions are accompanied in the report by enough data to enable readers to draw their own conclusions. Third, the findings of the anthropologist have been checked against the informants' intuitions.

A final problem with participant-observation methodology is that of objectivity. While true objectivity is largely unattainable, and possibly not even desirable, care must be taken by the fieldworker that his perceptions do not represent so limited and colored a perspective as to skew results. In an ideal situation, the fieldworker would take as much time as needed, try as many different roles as feasible, and test the conclusions with informants.

Another way to deal with the problem of objectivity is to utilize a team approach, with one fieldworker assuming a role permitting close interaction with some informants. At the same time, a second ethnographer, deliberately maintaining a degree of distance from the group, attempts to get as wide, if not as profound, a feel for the social situation as possible. The latter member of the team is then in a position to insure that the involved fieldworker's conclusions are balanced and to provide a broad perspective for interpreting them. (This is the approach used in the fieldwork presented in this report.)

## Ethnographers as Evaluators

While ethnographic descriptions of schools have a long tradition of usefulness, the employment of ethnographers as evaluators is much less common. To some degree, the distinction is apparent rather than real. Traditional ethnographies are, at least by implication, evaluative. Nevertheless, attempts to be explicitly

evaluative, rather than simply descriptive and analytic, raise a number of important issues.

First, anthropologists in the service of government agencies or commercial firms must deal with a number of situational constraints not encountered in traditional academic settings. These may include time limitations, the need to be cost effective, imposed deadlines which must be met, the need to focus on specific issues or questions of interest to administrators but not inherently interesting to anthropologists, and the necessity of writing reports for use by laymen.

In addition, the question of confidentiality takes on a new twist. While the traditional ethical imperatives still operate, in order for evaluative findings to be useful they must contain enough specific information to be of use to administrators and managers.

Again, space does not permit a full exploration of these questions. They have, however, been treated in the literature on evaluation, and the present report represents an attempt to do "good" ethnography while coming to grips with the constraints inherent in being hired evaluators.

The general rationale for the organization of this report is simple. Chapter 2 attempts to evoke a feel for the setting and ambience of the program. Chapter 3 details the questions addressed in this ethnographic evaluation and methodology used. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe significant aspects of the ACE program. This description is intended to provide a backdrop against which the case studies of Chapter 7 can be interpreted. The final chapter (8) draws together the ethnographers' conclusions, abstracted both from the material presented in the report, and from the huge amounts of data they have in their data files which could not feasibly be included in the written account.

## CHAPTER 2

## THE SETTING

The Academy for Career Education (ACE) is the title for the Experience-Based Career Education program developed by Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS). The Academy was moved from its former location in downtown Philadelphia to the Olney section of the city at the close of the 1973-74 school year. Located in the northeastern sector of the city, Olney is in many ways a typical urban community. Its main thoroughfare, Fifth Street, is a thriving business and shopping district, serving residents of the immediate area and nearby communities as well.

The people who live in Olney are mostly blue-collar working-class people, with some professional and managerial types. Olney, the community, is an ethnic and socio-economic mixture, although predominantly White. In an earlier era, the area was a fairly homogeneous German enclave. Olney, the High School, (drawing as it does from a wider area which includes parts of Nothern Philadelphia and Logan) is well over half Black.

This changing mix in populations has inevitably created strains and tensions between the school and the community, though, for the most part, the local residents have adapted to the situation. Their early fears of violence and vandalism have been gradually overcome.

### Olney High School

An old, once regal building, Olney High School stands fully a block long and a block wide, surrounded by scrawny trees and a sloping patch of green lawn. Cut out of the center of the tall stone building is a parking lot. Across the street from the parking lot lies the athletic field.

The main entrance of the high school is fashioned from oak beams and floored with marble. The dark oak speaks of the fashionable elegance of a previous era. Long marble and oak staircases bound either side of this entrance.

Another entrance from the parking lot leads into the basement/ground floor of the building. The halls winding through the ground floor are grey concrete and

dimly lit. The floors are strewn with litter--soda cans and paper. Tiled walls are graffiti-covered. In winter the building is always too hot; in summer it is close and humid because of inadequate ventilation. The stairway leading to the first floor where the ACE is located is framed in glass and oak doors. Concrete steps lead up to another stairwell.

The first floor halls are painted in grey and beige tones, contrasting with the colorfully dressed crowds of pupils filling them on school days. High ceilings add a dimension of space. Classrooms border the hallway which forms a square path around the perimeter of the school.

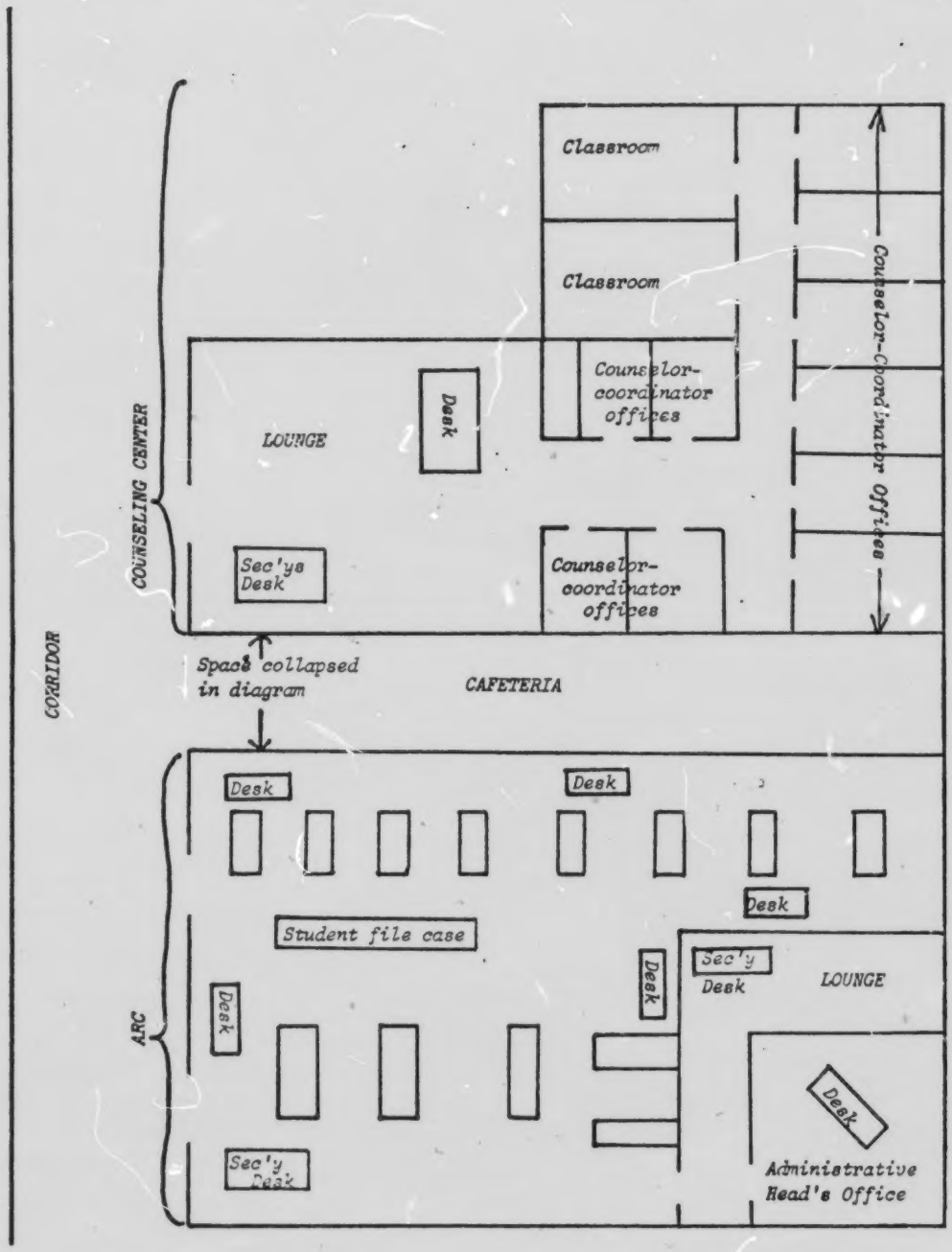
## The Academy For Career Education

The area along one length of the first floor hall has been claimed by the Academy for Career Education. Once four lunchrooms were located in this area. Now abandoned, two of the lunchrooms have been converted into the Academic Resource Center (ARC) and the Counseling Center (CC). (See Map 1 for a sketch of the ACE floor plan.) These two areas form the hub of the ACE. The two remaining lunchrooms, also no longer used for meals, serve as rendezvous points for students seeking to escape the vigilant eyes of hall monitors. Lunch tables and floors are strewn with soda cans and candy wrappers.

Because of the location of the lunchrooms, the hallway in front of the ACE has been customarily used by students as a meeting place. Students continue to congregate there, congesting traffic and provoking the ire of teachers and NTA's (non-teaching assistants who patrol the halls in an attempt to prevent loitering or vandalism and, generally, to maintain order.)

## The Academic Resource Center

The converted lunchroom which serves as the Academic Resource Center is a large room--approximately 2,500 square feet. A paperboard partition divides the student area from the director's office and secretary's office/ lounge area. The director's door is always open, and there is no foyer, so access to his office is direct. The location of his office, anterior to the secretary's, reinforces the sense of accessibility to the head of the ACE.




Map 1. Sketch of ACE Floor Plan

The remaining L-shaped portion of the room is reserved for the activities of the students and staff of the ARC. The function of this area is to provide space for learning activities and teaching assistance in the acquisition of basic skills in English and mathematics. Since these two subjects are compulsory for all students during their entire tenure in the ACE, much of a student's time is spent in this room.

The ARC work area itself is divided into two sections: one for mathematics and one for English. The back portion of the room, including the L-shaped section, houses the English component. Dividing this sector from the mathematics section are gun-metal grey-green cabinets which contain the learning materials used by students who need remedial work. The entire front portion of the room is used for mathematics.

The English and Mathematics sections are in turn broken up into smaller areas, each the territory of a single instructor. Students who are assigned to a particular teacher seat themselves in the appropriate section, thereby ensuring convenient student-teacher interaction. The teachers' desks are located on the periphery of their sections. Depending upon the teaching style of the individual instructor, his or her desk may be the hub of teaching activity, with students milling around it, or it may remain deserted as the teacher visits the students at their desks. There are also secretarial desks--one in the English section, one in the math section. At the entrance to the ARC is located the desk of the main secretary, who monitors all the goings and comings of the students in the ARC. This secretary checks attendance, answers telephones, types, and is the only one who really knows which students belong where during which periods.

With the exception of one wall of the L-shaped portion of the room, there are no windows. The windows of that wall, bordering the English section, face the stone and brick walls of the athletic annex. The walls are painted in yellow tones, and a green indoor/outdoor carpet pads the floor. The ARC is dimly lit and, like the rest of the school, close and stuffy. Two short walls are lined with bookcases housing texts and novels.

The room is large, but not large enough to accommodate comfortably the 80 or 90 students who may be in attendance during the heavily populated first and sixth periods on Mondays and Fridays. There is an almost constant din of chatter, interspersed with occasional requests or demands for silence from one of the staff or the director. The entrance is often clogged with students during period changes, and even during the period itself.

The entrance is the center of activity--a meeting place and a message exchange center. Students from the high school proper coming to visit friends enrolled in the ACE will peer in through the doors trying to catch their attention. A great deal of energy is expended by the staff in trying to minimize the distractions resulting from all these activities taking place at the entry-way. A major problem with the ARC is that each section of the room is visible to all others; a fracas or conversation in one area of the room is seen and heard in the rest of the room.

The front section (math) is divided by a long, low cabinet containing a series of small cubbyholes. Each cubbyhole is numbered and contains the work folder of a student in the ACE. On top of this cabinet is the attendance box. At the beginning of each period, students will enter the room and within the first ten minutes fill out an attendance card which is then collected by the head secretary. In this way attendance is checked during each period.

The only restriction placed upon students as to seating in the ARC is that they be in the appropriate section, close to their assigned teacher. Beyond this, they are free to sit where and with whom they choose. Generally, students will sit in the same or nearby seats each day.

The physical layout and classroom procedures are deliberately designed to create an ambience favoring individualized student effort. Students have free access to their folders, to teachers, and to instructional resources. Students are responsible for using these resources and keeping up with their lessons. (Chapter 5 includes a more detailed discussion of the individualized instruction.)

## The Counseling Center

The counseling center is, like the ARC, a converted lunchroom. One enters the area through a fairly large receptionist's office, carpeted in the same green as the ARC. Behind the office is a hallway which leads to two conference rooms and numerous small cubicles which serve as offices for the counseling staff. The two conference rooms and abandoned lunchroom are used for the guidance classes. Individual counseling, both informal and scheduled, takes place in the counselor cubicles.

## ACE Staff

### The On-Site Administrative Staff

On-site administration is the responsibility of the administrative head and his secretary. The administrative head is well regarded by the staff, in large measure because he does not interfere with their autonomy. Students do not regard him as one of the immediately important people they have to deal with in the program. On occasion he will come out of his office to wander about the ACE, amiably chatting with students. More rarely, he feels compelled to come out and quiet things down when the ARC gets too noisy. If problems arise which teachers cannot handle he is called upon to mediate or to discipline students. For the most part, however, he sees his job as that of keeping the machinery oiled and running. One of his important tasks, given the experimental nature of the program, is to guide visitors to the ACE, introducing them to staff and students and explaining the program's operation.

The administrative head's secretary occupies a desk in the student-staff lounge adjacent to his office. Her role in the operation of the program is vital. She knows where to find things and who to contact for any service that might be required. She is responsible for much of the day to day administration of the program and serves as a major link between the on-site staff and RBS.

### ARC Instructional Staff

The teaching staff of the ARC is comprised of six teachers: three English instructors and three math instructors. During any given period there are only four teachers on duty, two for each subject. There may be as few as six or as many as 25 students in each instructor's charge depending upon the period of the day, the day of the week, and the level of attendance. The population within the ARC is constantly changing.

Teaching styles of this staff vary and individual initiative is encouraged. Some teachers favor small group instruction with interaction at their desks. Most, however, spend their time working with individual students either at their own desks or at the desks of the students. In addition to instruction, some time each day is spent in attendance checks, discipline, and even janitorial chores. Since there is no lunch break provided in the

school day and only one ten minute break during the day in which food may be consumed, students inevitably snack food during classes and dispose of food wrappers in desks and tables. After each period the staff (and sometimes students) must clean up the debris that results.

Teachers in the ARC are volunteers from the home school (Olney High), with selection based largely upon seniority. They are all members of the teacher's union and adhere to union regulations concerning hours and pay scale. Every other period is taken as a break, with the teachers working in shifts.

Three of the ARC instructors are women and three are men. One instructor is Black; the others are white. With a single exception, they are generally liked by the students and work well together. The instructor who is the exception tends to view the ARC as a traditional classroom, seldom works with students on an individual basis, and prefers to address them in groups. This instructor adheres strictly to union regulations and generally refuses to accept non-teaching duties such as tidying up.

For the most part, the other teachers have accepted the challenge of individualization inherent in the ARC context. In fact, their conscientiousness is the root of their major frustrations. The English teachers, for example, are concerned that the materials, particularly the Individualized Learning for Adults curriculum, are inadequate for the student population of the ACE. They would like to have the time and freedom to revise and adapt them. One of them summed up this feeling as follows:

> ...individualized instruction vs. traditional instruction...traditional classes are more efficient in that the most message gets to the most students. However, from the standpoint of what a student takes in, the most efficient may be the least efficient...if you have the time you can get more across in a one to one situation. However, it takes a lot of time to get into anything that has any subtlety.

The instructors probably represent a cross-section of style and temperament characteristic of any public high school. The freedom, ambiguity, and lack of structure in the ACE put unusual strains upon them and tend to reveal their human shortcomings in bold relief. Many of the buffers erected to prevent teacher frustration in

traditional, structured environments are missing. Despite these problems, most of the teachers were able to establish a rapport and working relationship with their students and colleagues.

Counseling Staff

There are ten counselor-coordinators, and one who has been designated Team Leader. Their task includes teaching group guidance classes, conducting individual counseling sessions with students, and directing at least one career exploration experience for a group of students each term. An individual counselor will thus have three groups of students for whom he is responsible: a group guidance class; a cluster/resource site group; and a group of individual counselees. The job demands an energetic and selfless personality skilled in interpersonal interaction. The latter skill is essential in dealing with employers, other staff members and students. The widely divergent counseling styles exhibited by the counselors reflect their various backgrounds and personalities. All are young, representing a nearly even mixture of Black and white, male and female, and none have formal certification as public school counselors.

Support Staff

The ARC support staff consists of a secretary and two instructional aides. The instructional aides grade students' work (thereby freeing teachers to spend time helping students with their work), and help in the general management of the ARC. They also keep student records current and in order.

The secretary's tasks are many and varied. They include checking attendance, keeping track of schedules, answering student, staff, and visitor questions, duplicating materials and policing the room. This secretary contributes importantly, through both her work and attitude, to the smooth operation of the ARC.

## The Community Learning Centers

One of the basic tenets of the ACE is that the community, as well as the more artifically bounded school building, can serve as a learning center. Thus, various employers throughout the Philadelphia area open their places of business to ACE students. Spring Garden Col-

lege, ARCO, American Airlines, and Metropolitan Hospital are representative of employer sites. These and many more have put some of their staff and part of their physical plant at the disposal of the ACE.

Ideally, an employee specifically trained in interpersonal skills or with some teaching experience acts as liaison between the other employees and students. This person is designated "employer coordinator" and is the community resource counterpart to the counselor-coordinator. In an ideal community site situation, students are able to have real hands-on experience while at the site: That is, they may actually operate machinery or work at the job they have chosen to explore.

The community thus serves as a school, affording students the opportunity to learn not only about various occupations, but about important living skills as well--how to get around their city and how to handle themselves in the business community.

## CHAPTER 3

## THE ETHNOGRAPHIC EVALUATION

The ethnographic evaluation/description of the ACE addresses itself to several questions which are not easily answered by psychometric measures or by other traditional experimental evaluation techniques. These are, however, questions which should be of vital interest to anyone wishing to assess the impact of the program on students or to identify the variables (and their functional relationships) essential to any replication efforts.

These questions are:

1. What is it like to be an ACE student from a student's perspective?

2. What changes take place in students as a result of their ACE experiences? (The emphasis here is upon attitude toward education, work, and self image.)

3. How does the real program compare with the program on paper?

4. What are the operational standards for student success in the ACE?

These are obviously complex questions and to some extent the answers require subjective interpretations of selective data. To control for the inevitable bias of the investigators, as much data as feasible has been included in the form of descriptions of settings, personnel, and processes integral to the program. From this description, readers should be able to formulate their own tentative answers and check them against the conclusions of the investigators which are presented in the final chapter.

Such an approach to reporting presents extraordinary problems of organization. Some overlap in the data presented is not only inevitable, but useful. For example, some of the material first presented in the description of the curriculum is dealt with again, from a different perspective, in the discussion of program processes.

## Methodology

As with any ethnographic endeavor, the ethnographer doing the evaluation serves as the primary instrument for the investigation. Therefore, any claims to validity or reliability of conclusions demand not only qualified (i.e., trained and sensitive) investigators, but a rigorous and rational set of data collection, storage, and analytic strategies.

### Evaluation Personnel

The design for the study called for two anthropologists, one to serve primarily as field investigator and the second to direct the fieldwork, to coordinate the project, and to facilitate the fieldworker's task by acting as a liaison and buffer between the on-site investigator and the administrators and managers of the program.

While both anthropologists spent a considerable amount of time on site, responsibility for most of the data gathering fell to the fieldworker. To be able to describe life in the ACE program from a student perspective, it was necessary for the fieldworker to get "inside the heads" of the students. In order to balance somewhat the inevitable, indeed necessary, subjectivity which resulted from the fieldworker's assignment, the director remained in a position to put the fieldworker's perceptions and findings in larger perspective.

### Data Collection

To collect the data for the report, the fieldworker spent two to three days a week from January through June 1975 at the ACE site. Enjoying the fullest cooperation of the RBS management and ACE staff, she was able to participate in virtually every aspect of the program. She was able to observe and talk freely with students in the ARC. She also observed guidance classes, the processes of career cluster and specialization selection, and even some individual counseling sessions. She sat in on the regular staff meetings, and interviewed a large sample of students and all of the staff. In an attempt to get a feel for the informal interactions of program participants, she spent time during and after school sitting in the ARC and counseling center lounges talking with students and staff. She went to lunch regularly with the staff, transported students home from exploration sites, and attended a number of student social events. To get information on the attitudes of Olney

High staff toward the ACE, she talked with several non-participating teachers, the vice-principal, and the principal. She also conducted some on-site observations in community settings.

Between the fieldworker and the director of the ethnography, ten employer sites were visited, several of them a number of times. Students were observed at work, and employers were interviewed. Both of the ethnographers were invited to and attended official RBS receptions and seminars where they were able to talk with RBS employees and members of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce (GPCC), as well as managerial and operational staff of the ACE. On several occasions the director of the ethnography interviewed members of the RBS managerial staff.

Where possible and useful, tape recordings of interviews were made (using a Panasonic RG-212DS or Sony TC-45 cassette recorder). Field notes and tape recordings were written up and filed each day.

Both of the ethnographers enjoyed a close, informal relationship with ACE students and staff. Students who were being followed carefully for case study reports occasionally called the fieldworker at home to share insights or problems with her.

## Case Studies

A major focus of the evaluation was the compilation of case studies on representative students. These case studies differ somewhat from traditional case studies often used in other social sciences, in that the goal was to document, not the students' personal histories, but the nature of their participation in the ACE.

Fairly early in the evaluation, an initial sample of 18 students was identified as possible subjects for case study reports. An attempt was made to choose a sample reflecting the racial and sex ratios in the program. Other selection criteria were the inclusion of both first and second year ACE students and the representation of the more informal categorizations of students, including peer and staff judgements as to whether an individual is a "good" or "bad" student, a "character," a leader, or a follower.

These 18 students were asked to keep journals describing their daily activities in and out of school; their feelings, perceptions, and problems. The fieldworker reviewed the journals once each week, made comments, and followed up leads for the study suggested by

the students. Toward the middle of the evaluation period, eight students were chosen from this sample to be followed more closely. The fieldworker accompanied them in their daily round of activities, interviewed them twice each week, and visited all but two of them on their employer sites. Finally, where possible, the students' academic records were examined and each staff member (instructors and counselor-coordinators) was interviewed specifically about these students.

Report Preparation

The outline and general format of the report was the responsibility of the evaluation director, although input was solicited from the fieldworker. The actual writing was done by both of the ethnographers. Background and general descriptions were roughed out by the director and were checked by the fieldworker. The case studies were written by the fieldworker and then edited and revised by the director. Conclusions were discussed prior to the final write-up by the director.

## CHAPTER 4

## ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

In this chapter, the organization and structure of the ACE will be discussed in terms of the administrative and instructional components. This discussion will be extended in Chapter 5, where the effects of these components and their interrelations will be dealt with in terms of program processes. Both administration and curriculum in the ACE are composed of several discrete entities. Both the entities themselves and the bridge between them are of critical importance to the functioning of the Academy.

### Administrative Components

Four separate administrative units are involved in the operation of ACE, in addition to the Board of Education which has an indirect though vital interest in the program. These units are: the regional educational laboratory, Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS); the Academy for Career Education (ACE) itself; the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce (GPCC); and Olney High School (OHS). The spheres of responsibility for each of these entities and the nature of the relationship that has evolved between them is complex, and will be sketched briefly in this section.

#### The Educational Laboratory

RBS has overall responsibility for developing, administering, and evaluating the program. Within RBS, these tasks have fallen to the Career Education Program unit. The executive director of this unit is charged with overall administration of developmental and operational efforts and with liaison between RBS and the National Institute for Education (NIE), the funding agency. The executive staff of the Career Education Program is divided into six working components, each in charge of carrying out a discrete and specific function of the unit's complex developmental mission. One component develops and supervises the use of academic materials (math and English); one concentrates on the development and revision of career guidance materials; one creates materials pertaining to the use of employer resources; another engineers and initiates replication processes and materials; and still another devises and

documents management strategies for potential program adopters. Two RBS evaluators measure formative and summative outcomes of the ACE program and refine evaluation instruments. The units and the executive director serve as advisory resources for the ACE staff in addition to performing their individual developmental tasks.

The entire RBS administrative complement and their support staff are housed in the RBS offices in Center City Philadelphia. Although the director, his assistants, and the evaluators visit the ACE site in Olney occasionally, their roles do not include direct, day to day involvement in the program. In fact, with the move of the ACE from its original downtown site to Olney, the amount of regular interaction between the RBS staff and the ACE was significantly reduced.

The Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce

During FY 1974 RBS contracted with the GPCC to operate the Career Development and Career Guidance units of the program. GPCC took responsibility for hiring counselor-coordinators, and for identifying and developing employer/resource sites. With the relocation of the school to Olney, the concomitant closer relationship with the public schools, and the increased emphasis on establishing relationships with school districts in FY 1975, the GPCC responsibility has changed.

Counselor-coordinators now are hired and supervised by RBS, which has assumed responsibility for the entire program. The GPCC is still actively involved in the Career Development aspect of the program in an advisory capacity, and is consulted when major program changes or the adoption of instruments and materials are planned. Major liaison activities between the GPCC and the ACE, as well as day by day administration, are carried out by the Vice-President for Human Resources.

The implications this relationship has for the actual operation of the program will be explored in more detail in the discussion of integration and communication in Chapter 5. For all practical purposes, the role of the GPCC is that of advisor or outside consultant to the program, exercising virtually no decision-making powers with respect to its operation.

Much of the responsibility for operationalizing the relationship bewteen RBS, the GPCC, and the Philadelphia community in general, as well as general management of the program, rests in the Academy Board. The Academy

Board is an independent group with the responsibility for setting program policy, both developmental and operational. It is composed of representatives from the following categories: employers, education, labor unions, and community groups. Unlike the GPCC, the Academy Board does have decision-making power with respect to the operation of the program.

## Olney High School

A third administrative unit important to the operation of the ACE is Olney High School. OHS is not only the diploma granting institution for the ACE, but also the source of the staff for the basic skills component of instruction. All of the students in the ACE are regularly matriculated OHS students, and must meet all OHS graduation requirements to successfully complete the ACE program. In addition, students are expected to adhere to the normal OHS code of student conduct. Major disciplinary action is the responsibility of OHS administrators, the only real sanction available to the ACE staff being the threat of expulsion from the program.

The principal of OHS strongly supports the ACE and takes an active interest in it. However, the primary responsibility for administering discipline and for coordinating the interests of OHS and the ACE rests with the vice principal in charge of managing all OHS alternative programs.

The interrelation that exists between OHS and the ACE is a source both for some of the strengths and for some of the most difficult problems of the program. These will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 5.

## The Philadelphia Board of Education

The relationship between the Philadelphia Board of Education and the ACE is informal but important. Since the program is housed in one of the city high schools, it enjoys support as part of the Board's extensive alternative education program. In addition, there is a school district representative on the Academy Board.

## The Academy for Career Education

As indicated in Chapter 2, direction of the on-site activities of the Academy lies with an administrative head, who has an office in the Academic Resource Center at Olney. Day to day operation of the ARC and the coun-

seling center is his responsibility. The counselor-coordinators are directly answerable to him. To some extent, the academic instructors are as well, though there is a great deal of ambiguity as to his actual authority with respect to them, caused by their ties to OHS. The administrative head has a personal secretary, who gives support to his efforts.

Actual administrative details for the counseling staff are handled by the Team Leader, who coordinates staff activities, convenes and chairs regular staff meetings, and serves as an on-the-spot liaison with the Chamber of Commerce and the RBS developmental staff. He develops and supervises assignments for group and individual guidance, mediates conflicts between students and the program, and sees that the career development and guidance classes run smoothly.

## The Curriculum

The curriculum at the ACE is made up of three major components: academics, group guidance, and career development. This formal curriculum is supplemented and complemented by a structured program of individual counseling. Each aspect of the curriculum is treated in more detail in the discussion of critical program processes in Chapter 5. This chapter is limited to a simple sketch designed to provide a general overview.

### Academics

Instruction in basic skills--mathematics and English--is compulsory for all students during their stay at the Academy and takes place in the ARC. Electives, including physical education and health, biology, chemistry and languages are taken through the regular OHS program. History credit is awarded for participation in the experimental components of the program (employer site experiences). This practice of awarding credit for work which is not part of the regular curriculum evokes a good deal of negative reaction from the staff at the high school. They feel such practices represent a dilution of academic standards and a "perversion" of the concept of disciplines.

Credit for math and English is given solely on the basis of instructor assessment of progress. Instructors have a great deal of latitude in awarding credits. Based upon a student's career choice and interests, the instruc-

tor may decide to give credit for work not covered directly. For example, students who need credit for general math may be granted that credit when what they have taken is a semester of geometry. While this generally is done to facilitate a student's progress, it can be cause for concern. One student complained about receiving geometry credit when she had never taken geometry. She was fearful that sometime in the future she would be embarrassed because of her inability to produce work which her credits indicated she should be able to do.

Upon entering the program, students are required to take the CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) to determine the level at which they should begin work. If students score below the grade nine level, they are given diagnostic tests in their areas of weakness to provide additional information to instructors working with them. These students then begin work using a programmed learning approach developed by RBS, the ILA or Individualized Learning for Adults. The ILA math program is designed to bring students to a ninth grade level, through the basic operations in mathematics up to beginning algebra. ILA English concentrates on the word attack skills, basic grammar, and spelling requisite to reading and writing at the high school level. There is no programmed learning activity available beyond the ninth grade. While norms are available for assessing student progress after they have reached the ninth grade level, these are rarely used. As a result, students who score above this level on the CTBS or who progress beyond it during the year often spend their time reading on their own or being minimally tutored by instructors.

Each student spends two 44 minute periods a day, four days a week, in the ARC working on basic skills. As indicated in Chapter 2, the ARC is manned by six instructors drawn from the Olney High School staff. Four of these instructors are full-time in the ACE and two of them split their time between OHS and the ARC. In addition, there are two aides whose job it is to take care of records, check attendance, and grade assignments. During a given instructional period, each teacher oversees one area of the ARC and approximately 20 students.

Once the achievement level of students has been identified through testing, an instructor starts them on a unit at the appropriate level and then leaves them to work through the lesson at their own pace(s). From then on it is up to the student to seek out the instructor for help should problems arise. Instructors are supposed to make themselves readily available to review student

progress periodically and offer assistance as it is needed. When the student and/or instructor feel a unit has been sufficiently mastered, the student takes an examination which is graded by an aide. Depending on the results of the examination, the student either goes on to another unit or continues on the same one.

While the curriculum meets the needs of certain kinds of students, expressed student reaction to the ILA is overwhelmingly negative. Students tend to find it boring and unstimulating, little more than a recapitulation of junior high or elementary school. Two of the English instructors also expressed deep dissatisfaction with the ILA materials in their conversations with the ethnographers. Both instructors would like to see a revision of the materials with which they work.

The emphasis on individualization is bewildering and little understood by the students. A number have explicitly indicated that they would like to be able to work together in small groups, and, in fact, a significant amount of their energy is devoted to finding ways to bypass the efforts of staff and form working groups.

Field data yield a number of revealing comments. For example: "...it's all the same - all mixed up"; "...it's idiot work, boring, dry"; "...it's all right."

Furthermore, students are unhappy about the assessment procedure in the ARC, which they find arbitrary and too dependent upon the whim of instructors whom they feel don't really know students. One of the better students wrote in his journal:

> I got my English report back and I almost burst when I saw a B+ at the top of the poorly written paper but then I had a bad after taste when I began thinking that it was only a C- paper and I didn't really deserve that grade.

Not all students share these perceptions, and many, while confused and bored, find the ILA approach easier to deal with than the alternatives thay have experienced in the home school. One problem seems to be that students who have not been exposed to individualized instruction need to have some orientation or introduction to it. Perhaps this should be a major teaching objective of one unit of the individualized program itself.

Career Guidance

Career guidance is designed to integrate the academic and career development components of the program. Classes are held twice weekly for a total of one and one-half hours of discussion and counseling on career development. Through weekly discussion, exercises, and a variety of other learning activities, students are encouraged to weld together the various components of the program. Students assess their own situations and then weigh their needs and interests in an attempt to discover the occupation or profession best suited to them.

The development of group guidance materials, the design of the counseling component of the program, and the training of counselors was largely the responsibility of Carkuff Associates, a firm independent of any other agency discussed here. During the summer of 1974, three members of this firm conducted training sessions with the counselor-coordinators. These sessions were designed to aid the counselors in acquiring basic skills to be used in individual counseling, and to acquaint them with the group guidance curriculum which Carkuff Associates had developed in conjunction with several of the counselors. (While the curriculum was designed by Carkuff Associates, much of the actual writing was done by ACE counselor-coordinators.) The group guidance curriculum was designed to last for three academic semesters. As formatted, the first term concentrated upon helping students learn to make use of the career cluster and career specializations they would be exposed to. The second dealt with the processing of the experiences they were having, by emphasizing values clarification and decision-making. The final semester was to give instruction in making plans, developing alternative programs, and acquiring basic job acquisition skills, such as resume writing.

Counselors attempted to follow seriously and conscientiously the Carkuff curriculum that they had been trained in, but they found it necessary to make significant adaptions once they were in the classroom. These adaptations were required both in curriculum content and in teaching technique.

With respect to content, the focus of the curriculum was on learning operations or processes, with little concern for substance. Programmed, step-by-step lessons had been developed to lead students through the processes of decision-making or clarification of values, for example. Students were able to go through the lessons successfully without feeling that they had learned anything substantive.

The result was that they often became bored or frustrated. The philosophy underlying these materials appeared to be that once the processes were mastered they could and would be generally applied to the real world students live in. Counselors soon found, however, that unless the processes were associated with some content or led to some goal that students could "buy into", they would refuse to go through the activities. As the school term went on, more and more time was spent getting students to articulate questions they wanted to explore. For example, it was found that students needed to learn to identify their own interests, to gather information, and to better present themselves to prospective employers. Accordingly, activities dealing with these problems were introduced into the group guidance classes.

From the standpoint of teaching strategy, the career guidance curriculum was very tightly structured and was geared to a traditional school setting with blackboards and the other paraphernalia of the classroom. The training procedures were based on the assumption that counselors would follow the procedures religiously, introducing little of themselves into the process. This approach did not prove workable in actual practice, and for most of the second and third terms counselors simply used the materials as a framework or a guide within which they operated, substituting freely and leaving out operations or steps they found irrelevant to their goals.

A striking example of a counselor's resourcefulness and flexibility was observed by the fieldworker in a class designed to emphasize the skill and importance of knowing how to pay attention. The suggested activities in the prepared materials had proven ineffective and uninteresting to the students. The counselor, reaching back into his past school experiences, was able to conduct an exciting class that held the attention of all the students and effectively met the lesson's objectives. His procedure was as follows.

He presented the following ten nonsense items to the class in two steps:

One hen.
Two ducks.
Three squawking geese.
Four limerick oysters.
Five corpulent porpoises.
Six pairs of don Alverso's tweezers.
Seven thousand Macedonians in full battle array.
Eight brass monkeys from the ancient sacred crypts of Egypt.

Nine apathetic diabetic old men on roller skates who have a marked propensity toward procrastination and sloth.
Ten lyrical, spherical, diabolical denizens of the deep who hold school on the corner of the quay, the quo and the quivy all at the same time.

In step one the entire class repeated each item after the teacher, gradually building up to the whole thing. Thus;

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher: | One hen. | Class: | One hen. |
| Teacher: | One hen, two ducks. | Class: | One hen, two ducks. |
| Teacher: | One hen, two ducks, three squawking geese. | Class: | One hen, two ducks, three squawking geese. |

In the second step, the students were asked to write the entire sequence from memory.

The exercise was then followed by a discussion of the structural features of the sequence items that could be used in recalling the words, in strategies for observation and listening, and in strategies for reconstructing the words in proper order. The class was lively and exciting, and the improvised materials gave every indication of successfully achieving the objectives desired by the prepared materials.

In summary, the group guidance classes became increasingly concerned with the practical problems students were facing in their career explorations and specializations, rather than with the set of issues originally conceptualized by the program developers. While a good bit of time was still spent on the abstract issues of value clarification and decision-making, the rigid format designed by the consultants had been largely abandoned.

Student reaction to the guidance classes was generally favorable, partly because the counselors attempted to gear the class sessions to student desires and needs. Many students, however, found the materials confusing and didn't see how they fit in with the rest of the program. The atmosphere of the class and the content of the lessons did not fit their model of what school should be like. They found the Carkhuff material dealing with values clarification to be boring and irrelevant to what they were doing.

One student probably spoke for most when he told the field investigator:

> The guidance class was at first a stupid waste of time. All we had was dumb logsheets that didn't have any pertinence to reality. The counselor did his best to make it interesting. After we discarded the log sheets it became more of a discussion time. We'd rap and argue about everything and he would make a lesson out of it.

Career Development

The career development component of the curriculum constitutes the experience based aspects of the program, and includes both career exploration (mandatory for everyone) and career specialization (an elective for all but returning second year students). The component is designed to enable a student to investigate and experiment with a variety of jobs, professions, and occupations. At the same time, students are expected to acquire the basic and personal skills they will need to enter successfully the career of their choice.

Implementation of this component of the program is primarily the responsibility of the counselor-coordinators, working with the GPCC and the RBS developmental staff. Each counselor is responsible for developing several career clusters and then for identifying and developing programs with employers at sites with jobs represented in that cluster. (The process of site development is described in Chapter 5.) Approximately 23 career clusters are available for students to investigate, and over 90 employers participate in either the exploration or specialization programs. Clusters include such areas as transportation, law and justice, retailing, chemistry, and natural resources.

Career exploration. Each student must participate in at least one career exploration each term. Early in the term students decide which career clusters they are interested in, listing a first, second and third choice. Students are then assigned, if possible, to their first choice cluster. Problems of scheduling and differential popularity of clusters may make it necessary for the student to settle for his second or third choice.

While attempts are made to lead a student through a formal decision-making process to a carefully considered choice of career clusters that will suit his needs and

interests, most students make the decision on the basis of information they receive through the grapevine. They hope to get a cluster that is interesting, that is represented by employer sites that they can reach without a great deal of trouble, and, if possible, that their friends are taking. Often peer information includes remarkedly direct and relevant evaluations of the scope and quality of individual cluster programs.

A typical cluster exploration experience takes a group of eight to fifteen students through three different employer sites offering varying perspectives on a single career area. On the one day per week scheduled for exploration, students are expected to report on their own to the employer site and to participate in each of the planned learning activities. At the end of the twelve week experience, they are graded by the participating employers or, in rare cases, by the counselor-coordinator.

Care is taken by the counselors to choose employer sites that permit maximum participation of students in the jobs being explored. Most students prefer cluster experiences which have a dynamic presentation or which provide opportunities for "hands-on" work tasks and simulations. Many of the cluster experiences meet these standards, and some, like the program at a local nature center ("Natural Resources Cluster"), at a large department store ("Retailing Cluster"), and a local college ("Continuing Education Cluster") are perennially popular with students. Career Explorations (and Specializations) receive the most consistently positive student assessments of any of the ACE curriculum components.

Harold* articulates a feeling held by many students:

> I feel experiences in and out of cluster give me the necessary experience for the different situations I will be encountering in the near future. As far as objectives, I have put most of my emphasis on my career goal. What I am striving for in life is to become a successful journalist.

Student assessments do, however, suggest that the quality of the experiences offered at the employer sites varies significantly. Students' negative criticism is

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*To insure confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used throughout this report.

invariably directed towards "just talk/no action" exploration days. Dorothy, a bright and aggressive student, was bored and angered by one of her exploration programs. Her comments reflect a typical point of view.

> All we did was sit around all day and talk to each other. I don't like that. I like to work.

Career Specialization. A student who has participated in several explorations may elect to investigate one occupation or job in more detail. This indepth experience, or specialization, should lead to a fuller understanding of and feel for a particular job. Unlike the exploration experiences, where a group of students participate at the same time, specialization is conducted on an individual basis.

Working with a counselor and an employer-coordinator, a student defines objectives for the specialization. The student will then spend one day a week on the employer site for one or more of the twelve week terms, engaging in the activities which have been designed to lead to the completion of the defined objectives. As with exploration, the employer is required to assess the student's progress and report a grade at the end of the experience. Approximately 200 students availed themselves of the opportunity to pursue specializations during the 1974-75 academic year.

Edward, a senior, has been specializing in chemistry at Pennwalt. He wishes to be a chemist when he finishes his education. The Pennwalt experience has been a good one for him.

> I took Chemistry as a regular cluster last year and this year I'm working with the same people. These men help me a lot because they know my position. Chemistry is going to be my major in college and I'm getting plenty of laboratory experience at Pennwalt. The people are very friendly but I feel strange walking through the building. The Academy has benefited me so far because they got me into just what I wanted. I've worked a lot on my own which will prepare me for working in a chemistry laboratory. During the quarter I learned how to manipulate on my own at Pennwalt. I've performed many reactions and handled expensive equipment at Pennwalt.

Mae's specialization experience contrasts sharply with Edward's, but may have provided a valuable learning experience of another sort. Mae wanted to work with children. She made every effort to select cluster experiences which would give her this opportunity. She most recently elected to specialize at Children's Hospital in an attempt to isolate which aspect of child care would best suit her talents and needs. She was placed by the Director of Volunteers in the hospital pharmacy, performing tasks such as labeling and counting drugs--routine tasks which demand a high degree of responsibility, and which a regular volunteer might perform. Mae found herself bored with the routine, and the head pharmacist found her ill-suited to assume the responsibility required. Neither the student, nor the Director of Volunteers, nor the pharmacist understood what Mae's role was in the hospital, why she was there, or why she was unhappy and unsuccessful in carrying out her responsibility. She felt abused and the pharmacist felt she was disrupting the efficiency of his work force. Mae's perspective as she explained her dissatisfaction was

> I'm bored. I don't want to do this. I don't even understand what's going on. Everyone is too busy to explain anything to me. I just come in here and work. I want to leave early so that I can go to my other job. I came here because I wanted to work with children. I never even get to see a child.

The pharmacist simply said, "She doesn't fit." The Director of Volunteers said,

> I have many schools anxious to send students here. Our volunteer program has grown this year from 60 or so to 260. I have been very busy and unfortunately unable to give all the time I would like to Mae. Our hospital policy is such that an untrained volunteer is not permitted out on the floor with the children. You understand that we cannot have untrained personnel working with our children. Mae is only here one day a week and this does not permit much training.

Mae was treated as an ordinary volunteer in the hospital due to her lack of training and an overworked staff. She saw one aspect of hospital life, but not the aspect which would have been of most interest to her.

There are also situations in which a single site may be viewed as a positive experience by one student, and as a relatively negative experience by another. Maria was given the opportunity at the Naval Base to work at a job which is not ordinarily performed by women. She was delighted to be permitted to work with an electrician, welding and experimenting with tools under close and careful supervision. This specialization, in what is ordinarily a man's job, has left a deep impression on Maria.

> I got to learn something about electrical work. I know there are more jobs available to women than most people. Women don't have to do just typing and nursing. It was very exciting and special for me to do this kind of work. I really am grateful for that opportunity.

Mike, specializing at the same resource site, felt troubled about the kinds of experience he was getting.

> I'm bored. They really don't let me do anything that I want to learn about. It's hot on the ship. I'm not interested in this kind of work. I want to do construction work. And they don't let me do anything like that here.

In summary, not only is the career development component of the program the core of the ACE but it is the part the students respond to most favorably. All students are required to explore several career clusters and they give positive testimony to the value of these experiences in realistically narrowing their possible career choices. For those who elect specializations the rewards are even more significant. However, not all of the participants have profited or have enjoyed their experiences equally. Most of the complaints stem from frustration at not being permitted to get actively involved in jobs. Where participants can really do the work they tend to be enthusiastic.

# CHAPTER 5

# CRITICAL PROGRAM PROCESSES

The preceding sections have attempted to sketch the structure of the ACE. Chapter 6 will describe several students and their perceptions of the program. However, the ACE--like any educational program--consists of more than people, curricula, and administrative structures. It is comprised of people engaged in a variety of ongoing activities. This section describes a number of those activities critical to making the ACE what it is.

It is impossible to describe every significant program activity in a report such as this. Those included here were chosen because they met one or more of the following criteria: (1) they appeared to be innovative or particularly crucial to the unique flavor of the ACE; (2) they presented serious problems, either in implementation or in conception; (3) they were important in explicating or providing background for the student reactions described in the succeeding chapter.

In addition to providing a context for student perceptions of the program, these discussions should enhance the readers' "feel" for the ACE and should constitute a basis for judging the success and usefulness of the program. Furthermore, since these descriptions reflect what is actually done, as determined by direct observation and informal interviews with program participants, they will serve to document the fit between the program as presented on paper and its implementation.

## Student Recruitment

The 1974-75 academic year represented the third year of Academy existence. Procedures for recruiting students during the first two years differed significantly from those employed the third year. Since the procedures of the latter year represent those used in the program's stabilized mode and those which presumably will be followed in the demonstration and pilot programs projected for 1975-76, they are the only ones discussed.

In March of 1974, Carkuff Associates of Amherst, Massachusetts, (active in creating the career guidance curriculum for the ACE) developed a student recruitment

plan. The plan was designed both to acquaint program personnel with the material they would be using in the guidance classes, and to attract and screen prospective students. The recruitment process involved the following major steps:

(1) During the first phase, counselors from the program went to English classes in Olney High School and presented a short description of the program to the students. During this presentation, students who were interested in entering the ACE were invited to identify themselves and to attend a second meeting.

(2) At the second meeting prospective students met in small groups with a counselor who answered questions and led them in an indepth exploration of the ACE program. At the conclusion of these meetings students who were still interested were asked to make a commitment to participate in the ACE. While these procedures constituted a process of self-selection, the ACE staff did try to discourage students with a prior record of poor attendance from continuing the process.

(3) The third step had prospective students choose an actual career cluster to explore in more detail. The choice was made with the guidance of the counselors and the consultants, using the complex decision-making model that was later to be implemented in the career guidance aspect of the Academy's instructional component. This model took students through a series of operations during which they posed "who, what, when, where and why" questions about a decision (in this case the decision to explore a particular career cluster). The result of the process was an operational set of criteria for making the decision.

(4) Finally, booths were set up for each career cluster, stacked with literature and manned by a counselor. Each prospective student was interviewed by the counselor responsible for the cluster, and encouraged to ask the questions which had been formulated in the exercise described in step three above. The student performances (i.e., the questions they posed) were evaluated by the counselors using a weighted set of criteria. In theory,

this procedure permitted a somewhat objective ranking of prospective recruits reflecting their suitability for the ACE program. Those judged unsuitable would not be invited to participate in the lottery which would determine the composition of the experimental and control groups.*

Since the program design required a pool of virtually the same size as the number of applicants, very few were actually selected out by the counselor assessment described in step four above. From the pool, 254 experimental students were randomly selected to enter the program, and 86 were put into the control group.

In addition to the 254 students admitted through the lottery, about 35 others applied on their own after the lottery and were admitted. These were students who either had heard of the program through friends and thought it would suit their needs, or had heard the counselors' presentation and made a late decision to apply. Three students who had been identified as controls were erroneously admitted by the director.

In summary, despite the elaborate recruitment procedures, the great majority of students who applied to the program were admitted. For the sake of maintaining the integrity of the evaluation design, the 254 students chosen by the lottery -- the true experimentals -- were kept distinct from the other students for evaluation reporting. All Academy students, whether admitted through random selection or not, received the same pre-posttest treatment and were exposed to the same structure for instruction and counseling during their stay in the program.

## Program Activities at the Academy Site

### Individualized Instruction

As described in Chapter 3, the instructional component of the ACE consists formally of three subdivisions: career development, career guidance, and basic skills.

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*The selection of experimental and control populations was required by the internal evaluation conducted by the RBS evaluators.

A key feature of the ACE approach is the individualization of instruction in basic skills. The basic skills curriculum has already been described. This section focuses upon the actual classroom processes, with emphasis upon staff, student, and evaluator reactions to them.

Consistent with the underlying philosophy of individualized instruction, students are allowed to proceed at their own pace. Teachers are responsible for knowing the competencies, interests, and work habits of students in order to encourage and direct in the ways best suited to the student. No rigidly applied, universal criteria for assessment exist. Students are presumably evaluated according to their own patterns of growth.

Most of the ACE students are engaged in working through the IIA materials, which are designed to bring them to the ninth grade level. When a unit is mastered, the instructor signs and dates a form indicating completion. These forms and other instructor comments are placed in student folders filed in a cabinet in the ARC (Academic Resource Center). Since these folders are available to students, they always have an up to date record of their achievement.

## Classroom Logistics

At the beginning of each period students fill out attendance cards which are collected by an aide later in the period. Students then get their folders and sit down in the area of the room where their instructor for the period is located. Here the students check their folder to determine the unit that they should be working on, and begin their individual work. If they need help, they will call upon the instructor. When students feel accomplished they take the test covering the material worked on. An aide immediately grades it. The results are given to the instructor who decides whether the student should go on to the next lesson or go back over the unit just completed, suggesting what should be worked on and how.

## Effects of Classroom Atmosphere

Typically, there are four classes meeting at the same time in the one room of the ARC. Each class may have from six to 25 students, depending upon the attendance that day. Most students choose to sit with their friends when possible. The atmosphere is characterized

by a great deal of talking and movement. Visitors, students, and staff come and go frequently, and any particular hub of activity is visible to everyone.

Many students find the atmosphere not conducive to concentration, and a number of the instructors find themselves spending most of their time trying to keep order and to quiet the room. This, plus the size of the classes, often keeps instructors so occupied that they have little time to attend to students who really need help or to seek out those who are afraid to ask for assistance. As a result, several students complained their progress is slowed simply because they have to wait so long to get a teacher's attention.

Observations of the ARC not only support this student complaint, but suggest that the problem is not simply one of teaching load. Too often the ARC experience is seen as a contest between teacher and students. Teachers are concerned that students conform to the implicit structure they have imposed on the situation and students accept the challenge of thwarting this attempt. For example, we have observed a math teacher threaten a student with a "zero" for doing English in the math section of a room. Students have been heard bragging that they were able to avoid contact with a teacher during the entire class period.

## Effects of Teacher Styles

Teacher styles and personalities differ significantly. This has a number of effects on instruction and student perceptions. Most of the instructors stand ready to help students in any way possible. Some, for a number of reasons, are perceived by students as unapproachable. One reason is that some teachers appear to be always involved in talking to others. Another is the fear of humiliation at the hands of the teacher. Related to both of these reasons is the belief that the teacher will not give the help needed.

Following one student, Ben, through a (presumably atypical) day illustrates these problems. Ben's first class was guidance. The class was unusually noisy and the counselor, normally unflappable, shouted at Ben to shut up. Singling Ben out, he launched into a lecture on the necessity of raising hands when one wanted to speak. Ben, feeling humiliated and unfairly singled out, tried to argue that this was a childish approach. The counselor responded by threatening to kick him out of class if he didn't follow the rule.

His next period was math. On the way he stopped in the English section of the room to chat with a friend. The English teacher, in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, commanded, "Get out of my part of the room!" Once in the math section, things got worse. There were no books left. He couldn't do his work, so he started talking with the girl sitting next to him. Again he was humiliated when the math teacher erupted, "Shut up Mr. C.... These people are taking a test!" At this point the English teacher, who had heard the commotion, chimed in loudly, "Yes Ben C and Marie G, you are keeping everyone from working."

At this point Ben simply put his head on the table in embarrassment and anger until the period ended. His ordeal wasn't ended. He then went over to talk with a friend on the other side of the ARC only to have the Administrative Head come out of his office and ask loudly, "Ben C, where do you belong?" Ben just walked away, obviously depressed and frustrated.

While Ben simply wrote these experiences off as part of "a bad day that was best forgotten," they do illustrate a major set of problems inherent in implementing an open, individualized approach to instruction. In follow-up discussions with the instructors involved in this unhappy day for Ben, none admitted to deliberately attempting to humiliate him. The guidance counselor felt that he had a good enough rapport that he could single Ben out without embarrassing him. The English teacher saw it as half a joke, and the math teacher considers Ben a "goof-off" who has to be constantly "sat on." The administrative head simply happened on the scene and assumed that Ben was living up to his reputation for "being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

All of these individuals considered themselves to be sensitive and interested in the student's welfare. All assumed they were responding in a "mature" and supportive way on a person to person rather than on a teacher/student basis.

This simple illustration demonstrates how one of the major strengths of the program, a willingness to deal with students as individuals, can be a serious problem given the variety of interactive styles of the staff and the impossibility of really getting to know students as individuals.

This leads to another problem frequently discussed among students: the criteria for student evaluation. Occasionally, students feel that the quality of work is not as important as is having a good "rap" with the

instructors or having a close joking relationship with them. This is particularly true of students who have progressed beyond the ILA materials. These students are free, with the help of a teacher, to choose subjects they would like to pursue and then to work on projects. Some agreed-upon task serves as the basis for their grade. This may be a test, a paper, or a report, and the credit gained may be awarded for a number of different subjects. While this flexibility is appreciated by most students and is one of the major strengths of the program, it does tend to confuse and penalize some students, especially those who are less self-confident and aggressive--perhaps those who would have had similar problems in a traditional setting.

Elwin, one of the better students in the ACE, explained his concern with the way one of the math teachers grades:

> David isn't doing anything in math. He's upset because he got a "D" on his report card while Bradley got a "B". David does advanced math while Bradley is still on the fundamentals and they're both in the twelfth grade. Bradley couldn't do David's work or mine but we could do his easily. Yet he gets better marks than us.

Elwin's explanation of the teacher's rationale was simple and typical:

> Mr. C marks his students by personal opinion. Sometimes it's good if he likes you. But if you are on his blacklist, you'll flunk.

As the student profiles in Chapter 7 reveal, this is a very real and persistent problem among students.

## Counseling

Individual counseling is, like individualized instruction, a key focus of the ACE. Counseling and instruction are seen as closely related, interpenetrating aspects of the program design. Counselor-coordinators are responsible for two of the three subdivisions of the instructional component--career development and career guidance. Counselors are expected to be aware of the academic progress, problems, and standings of students as they provide career counseling and guidance; and counselors are involved in overall student assessment.

In the ACE as it exists, however, the situation is more complex than indicated by the table of organization. As perceived by both students and staff, the division between counseling and instruction is clear and basic. Counselor-coordinators are not recruited from the Olney High School staff and are not required to have had either experience or certification in teaching. The physical layout of the school is such that the two groups operate in separate spheres and rarely interact. While the loyalties and primary affiliation of instructors is to the high school, that of the counselors is to RBS. The instructors tend to view their jobs from a more traditional public school teacher perspective. The counselor-coordinators identify more with an alternative, extra-public school outlook.

While there are advantages to including both approaches in a field-based career education program, such a situation does create problems of integration and of congruency of goals. This will be explored further later in this chapter. This section briefly describes the major contribution of the counselor-coordinator staff without attempting to distinguish carefully between their instructional and counseling roles. The major source of data is our own observations and conversations with program personnel.

To supplement programs in group guidance, which focus almost exclusively upon career related topics, and the ARC, with its purely academic focus, students are scheduled to meet at least once every three weeks with counselors on an individual basis. To accommodate this schedule, each counselor is assigned a counseling load of approximately 30 students. Insofar as possible, students are assigned to counselors who are responsible for career clusters related to their interests.

The assignments grew out of students' experiences in the guidance classes, so a student's counselor was often his or her instructor as well. This theoretically contributes to a sense of continuity and integration, and assures students of access to a counselor who knows their situation well.

As it turns out, the actual amount of contact between counselor and student varies greatly. Students generally fall into one of three groups. There are a few who took the individual counseling very seriously, and always come to the counseling sessions, often more frequently than expected. In addition, these students make

sure that any assignments that are given (such as resume preparations, etc.) are done on time. A second group consists of students who usually come when required, but generally do not take the procedure seriously as an integral part of their program. They enjoy the opportunity to relate to the adult counselor in an informal, joking way. A third group just stays away, and never talks to their counselors unless the counselor makes a special effort to seek them out. Approximately two thirds of the students attend counseling sessions once a month, and according to sample counselor logs (which are kept by some but not all counselors), counselors average between nine and ten contact hours a month in individual counseling of students.

More difficult to assess is the quality and usefulness of the individual counseling. By its nature, the relationship between counselee and counselor tends to be private and confidential, making it difficult to observe the process first hand. Discussions with counselors and students indicate that this component of the program is both one of the most important and one of the most problemmatical.

On the positive side, the students seem to appreciate the ready access to someone they can share their problems and perceptions with. Counselors tend to develop free and informal relationships with students, interacting on a first name basis and making an effort to know each student (not just their own counselees) by name. For the most part, the counselors leave their doors open so anyone can drop in at will. The opportunity to establish easy relationships with adults is frequently mentioned as one of the important spin-offs of the program.

The problems and weaknesses are less easy to pinpoint. One perennial problem is that of motivating students to take the counseling sessions seriously, to keep their appointments, and to do the assignments given them. This, in part, results from several larger and more pervasive problems. First, counselors themselves have no clear idea of what the counseling should consist of. Due to the structure of the program, the lack of real communication between instructors and counselors, and the absence of an operational central filing system, counselors frequently find themselves without the information they need to counsel adequately. As a result, the individual counseling sessions tend to become an occasion for students to either rap with a counselor or to unburden themselves about problems. This can not necessarily be viewed as a weakness of the sessions, however. It may be their true and legitimate, though unstated, purpose.

While the individual counseling was presented as an intrinsic and important part of the program, students did not find that it offered anything that they could "buy into," did not get a grade for their participation, and consequently seldom saw reason to take it seriously. On the other hand, many students found the opportunity to talk freely to staff who knew them by name and who were obviously interested in them as people, to be one of the most attractive aspects of the program.

Probably it is in the individual counseling that the everpresent but normally submerged set of potential conflicts between the white middle class values of the program and the predominantly Black working class values of the student population comes most frequently to the surface. This is seen in one of the most frequent complaints of the counselors, "students don't keep their counseling appointments and when they do they seldom come on time." The counselors see the structuring of counseling sessions (with the onus for making them work on the students) as an overt attempt to inculcate values of "mature responsibility" and promptness. A discussion of these, and other value conflicts, is one of the major activities of the counseling sessions themselves.

Another major topic of concern in the individual counseling sessions, reflecting a serious conflict between students' life contexts and the world of school, as well as potentially, the world of work, are school and experience site attendance problems. Many of the Black students are chronically absent. Counselors see this as a serious shortcoming that indicates an unwillingness to accept responsibility, and that will, if carried over after graduation, be a serious handicap in keeping a good job.

Students, on the other hand, often face very real obstacles to regular attendance that are exacerbated when they have to travel to employer sites. Among their common problems are family responsibilities (several have children of their own or live with only one parent and have to share in the care of siblings), unfamiliarity with the city, public transportation problems, and the dangers of crossing the turfs of certain gangs. One student confided to the field investigator that she missed several times because she was warned by her brother that gang trouble was brewing and she had better not venture out. However, she was embarrassed to discuss the problem with her counselor since she was ashamed and felt he would not understand.

In summary, the individual counseling sessions appear to be, in general, one of the least effective aspects of the program. There are obvious exceptions to this. Some self-motivated students profit greatly from the advice and counsel they get, while others find the support they experience in simply rapping with an adult helpful. The problems stem from the confusion in the minds of both counselors and students as to the purpose of the sessions, the subcultural conflicts that inhibit meaningful communication, and the ambiguity in the minds of students as to what they are "buying into" or getting graded for. (Incidentally, steps have been initiated by the incoming administrative head to upgrade this aspect of the program by sharply defining and delimiting the counselor-coordinators' roles and by making more extensive use of the high school guidance counselors.)

## Field Experiences

Counselor-coordinators had the main responsibility for identifying, contacting, and developing sites where students could be placed for their field experiences in 1974-75. During the previous year, the Chamber of Commerce had been responsible for the entire career development aspect of the program and there was already a history of extensive participation and cooperation on the part of area employers.

Although a uniform "Site Analysis Procedure" form was drawn up and made available to counselor-coordinators, the loose structure of the program and general lack of administrative interaction resulted in little actual exchange of ideas among individuals. Depending on the experiences and preferences of counselors, several styles of developing employer sites are in use. However, a typical approach is sketched below.

After making the initial contact and getting the cooperation of an employer, two extensive planning sessions are held. During these sessions, the first order of business is assessing the resources of the site--determining what personnel are available and who would be best in working with the students; what are the physical facilities that can be used to best advantage; and what learning activities can be designed to best familiarize students with the essential characteristics of the careers they will be exploring.

This assessment is carried out by interviewing the employers, having them introduce the counselor to appropriate personnel, and conducting an on-site tour of facilities. Following this assessment, the counselor-coordinator and employer-coordinator sit down and rough out the projected program on paper. This involves deciding what careers students will attempt to explore, who (among the employees at the site) could best represent those careers, and what learning activities will contribute to this goal. Learning activities might be lectures with question-answer periods, demonstrations, tours, or training sessions.

Once the program for a particular site has been agreed upon by both the counselor-coordinator and the employer-coordinator, the employer-coordinator has the main responsibility for putting the plan into operation. As would be expected, the programs differ radically as to the rigidity of structure, actual involvement of students in activities, and criteria for assessment. Such factors as safety, insurance regulations, security, and union rules often determine the level of possible student involvement.

Finally a "Career Exploration Cluster Guide" is prepared detailing everything students and staff need to know about the site, including information on available facilities, special regulations that will be in effect, directions for getting there, people to be contacted, dates, credit to be given, occupational areas to be explored and each day's objectives and activities.

Students are responsible for getting to the employer site on time for each of the scheduled exploration days. They make their own transportation arrangements. The employer checks attendance, makes certain that the projected learning activities are carried out, and gives a grade for the quality of the students' participation. The counselor-coordinator who developed the site sees that students are properly introduced to the personnel they will be dealing with on the site, checks each day to see that there are no serious problems, and integrates the students' experiences into his total program.

During or after the last day of the exploration, students are required to fill out a form evaluating their experience. This gives them an opportunity to indicate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the experiences, and what they feel they have learned from them.

Specialization--A Case Study

Career specialization experiences are designed to permit students to take an indepth look at careers they are seriously interested in. Theoretically, such experiences are designed to tread the fine line between providing real exposure by permitting actual participation in the work at hand and student exploitation. Following is a short sketch of one student's day in a career specialization. This was a generally enjoyable specialization, but the example is chosen to illustrate some of the frustrations and humiliations students face as well as the more positive aspects of such experiences. The data are gleaned from observations, interviews with the student, and some descriptions he included in his journal. The student's name is Ben.

Ben's specialization is at an elementary school where he works with an art teacher who teaches at the kindergarten and fifth grade levels. When Ben arrives at the school he goes directly to the main office and signs in. From here he goes to the art classrooms where Mr. K works. Ben's own description of Mr. K is colorful and accurate:

> Mr. K is usually uncoordinated. Describing him is tough. He looks like he is in his late forties and he has a beer belly. . . His pants are far above his ankles. He doesn't seem like he is prepared to deal with youngsters. K is very emotional and excitable. He turns and greets me in his sour voice.

Ben's first task is to help sort out different paints. As the first kindergarten class comes in, Mr. K asks him to get some scouring powder so he can clean off an art table.

Ben says of this:

> I was going to tell him that wasn't what I was here for but I changed my mind and left to get it.
>
> I headed for the custodian's room which is next to the teachers' lounge. No one was there but soon a tall gray-haired Black man came in wearing blue workpants and a blue shirt. He nodded and asked what I wanted.

I told him and he began picking around in some boxes but couldn't find the cleanser so he told me to follow him. He finally found some in the closet. I thanked him and took it back.

When Ben came back to the classroom, Mr. K was showing the kindergarteners pictures of cars, trains, planes and other modes of transportation which they were instructed to draw. As Ben and Mr. K passed out the paper to draw on, a short man with glasses came into the room and sat down.

Ben says:

I immediately tabbed him as someone from the Board of Education. That explained K's behavior. Today he actually decided to teach a lesson. Usually he just passes out paper and tells the class to draw anything. Today he was trying to impress this man.

The class was typical of some kindergarten behavior with pupils running back and forth. Mr. K seemed to be having difficulty keeping his composure. The commotion obviously was distracting but he wanted to make a good impression.

At the end of the class the principal came in. She smiled when she saw Ben and said:

Ben, would you please leave the room? We have to talk to Mr. K. Why don't you get yourself a cup of coffee, alright?

In the teacher's lounge Ben greeted the teachers that were there, poured a cup of coffee and sat down to watch T.V. After about half an hour he went back to the classroom where Mr. K was already at work. Mr. K immediately asked him to take over, since he had to leave and take care of some personal business.

Ben comments:

It didn't bother me because I had taken the class before. The kids are well behaved because they know me.

Mr. K returned just before the class was dismissed. Mr. K stepped out again just as the fifth grade came in and Ben had to get the class in order, try and keep them quiet, and get them started on their lessons. When

they finished their painting, Ben cleaned up the brushes and left for the day.

Judged on a number of dimensions, Ben's specialization was exceptionally valuable. In the first place, he took an active part in the job. He did not just take care of the unimportant details, but he actually got to teach the class. Furthermore, he had an opportunity to experience and see the good and bad aspects of the job--being an errand boy, having to check in, seeing Mr. K acting naturally and performing, being treated like a child when the principal came into the room, and also experiencing the rewards of having the class respond to and like him. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, he was able to get some feel for the ambience of the job through his casual relationship with Mr. K, his interaction with the janitor, and his contacts in the teacher's lounge.

While not all career specializations provide this rich an experience, these are apparently the significant dimensions by which their success can be judged.

## Student Assessment

Student assessment is a crucial issue in the ACE for two reasons. First, all students are matriculated in OHS and what they do in the ACE counts as course credit toward graduation from the high school. Thus there are real pressures to make the assessment processes equivalent to those used in the home school. Second, the ACE is an experimental program and, as such, it is important to management and evaluation personnel to know how the program is working, for whom, and why.

Students receive grades for all three of the instructional components of the ACE on their report cards, which are issued four times a year from the high school. The basic skills courses are usually counted as General Math and English. For students who have completed the ILA, however, the credit may be awarded for some other course. Career guidance is listed on the report as a Career Experience course, and career development may show up as American History, Urban Studies, or Social Science.

A letter grade (A, B, C, D or F) is assigned for the quality of work, and a number grade (1, 2, or 3) is awarded representing behavior, with 1 being "good," 2,

"acceptable," and 3, "poor." Teachers assign the grades for behavior directly. For the indicators of quality of work, teachers submit course grades on a numerical scale from zero to 100, and these numbers are then converted into letters in the central office.

Criteria for assigning both letter and number grades are flexible and vary greatly from teacher to teacher. With respect to behavior assessment, such factors as attendance, willingness to follow directions, and general deportment are used, but the criteria are differentially applied. The situation is further complicated by the fact that grades emanate from three sources. Instructors grade the basic skills work, counselor-coordinators grade the group guidance classwork, and employers submit grades for exploration and specialization. (There are a few exceptions to the latter, because some employers refuse to give grades. In those cases, counselor-coordinators grade student experiences on the basis of their observations or information supplied to them by the employers.)

Perhaps the greatest problems in consistent and meaningful assessment of student performance exist with the employers. Some, like General Electric and Bell Telephone, have devised very clear and carefully thought out standards. Students are apprised of these criteria, which are used as the basis for grading. On the other hand, one large bank refuses to give more than one A grade per exploration and awards mostly C's. Another employer never gives less than a B unless students fail to show up at all, in which case they get an F. The same sorts of variation can be observed in the assignment of behavior grades.

As noted earlier, there are no universal standards for the awarding of credit, the assignment of homework, or the assessment of students in the ARC. This inconsistency is congruent with the philosophy of the program. However, the rationale is not understood by students and is the basis for a number of concerns.

For example, some of the ARC instructors require book reports of the "bright" students who are not using the ILA materials, but do not make the same demands of those students judged as having less potential. In other instances, one instructor may demand a report for the same course in which another does not. The net result is the kind of confusion revealed in the following exchange:

John: Well, Marty doesn't have to do a book report each quarter, why do I?

Teacher: Well, I require a student to do a book book report for me each quarter. I don't know what Miss _____ requires but I try to let each student of mine know that is what I expect.

Even if students are clear as to what each teacher expects and why, they may still be confused by their grades. Again, John's reaction to a grade he had just received is instructive:

> I think Mr. _____ just gave me that grade 'cause he wanted to. I don't think I deserved it. He gave Marty a different grade for the same thing. It wasn't fair and I don't understand it.

What John did not understand was that the instructor felt Marty had worked to his potential, while he (John) had not.

It is perhaps even more difficult for counselor-coordinators to evaluate work done in the guidance classes than it is for instructors to assess work done in basic skills. The use of the Carkuff booklets does yield some concrete basis for giving a grade. However, the materials are not used in the same manner by all students, and are, as was discussed previously, frequently not followed carefully in class by the counselors. Furthermore, since the classes are expressly designed to explore topics of current interest to students, there is no generally shared body of information on which standard tests can be based.

Most counselors work closely enough with students so they can judge fairly accurately the amount and quality of the work the students have done. At least one counselor has devised a series of tests on which grades are based.

However, students remain perplexed. Even when they get a good grade, they are not quite sure why. The very fact that they are going to be graded serves to dampen their enthusiasm for these classes, and probably decreases their participation. They prefer "rapping" with others about their experiences to grappling with the abstract curriculum. Even counselors who regard such rap sessions as valuable find them difficult to grade. Attempts to

accommodate these conflicting demands probably explains, to some extent, the nature of the classes and the student reaction to them. While a few students said of the guidance class, "Yes, it has helped me make decisions," a more typical reaction was, "I go to guidance because you don't have to do much but I really don't like it. It's a waste of time."

Behavior grades, while not contributing to graduation credit, are of real concern to students. Parents frequently are more interested in these than in the academic grades. Again, there is no universally followed procedure for making these evaluations. Rarely have the ACE staff had to contend with serious discipline problems. For the most part, the grades reflect attendance, punctuality, participation in class discussion, and completion of assignments. However, at least one counselor-coordinator feels that all students should receive a "1" (good) unless they have misbehaved. If a student never showed up for class, he might get a failing grade in the academic evaluation but he would get a "1" in behavior by that criterion.

In summary, the flexibility and lack of universally applied criteria are consistent with the philosophy of the program and have worked. However, the lack of adequate centralized records, regular meetings between those responsible for giving grades, and formal disposition conferences where staff could confer on individual students causes some confusion and resentment on the part of students. Students simply are not aware of the rationale for grading.

One potential problem with respect to student evaluation, that of providing adequate feedback to students, has been obviated to a great extent by the program. In the ARC, students have an up-to-date record of their progress, and the grapevine informs them as to how this progress will be translated into a grade by individual instructors. Counselor-coordinators are generally available and willing to give feedback on the standing of students in their career guidance classes. Again, however, a simple caveat is in order. While the feedback mechanisms are in place, it takes a fairly aggressive student to take full advantage of them. More retiring or unsure students may still be anxious over their standing.

## Staffing

### Recruitment

The ARC. As already noted, the ARC instructors are recruited from OHS and remain part of its staff. They are given a salary increment to compensate them for extra time they are expected to put into staff meetings or other duties after the end of the union defined full day, which ends at 1:11 p.m.

The first step in recruiting teachers was to negotiate the number of teaching slots OHS would be willing to fill in the ACE. RBS and the OHS principal finally agreed upon 5.2. After the teachers were informed about what teaching in the ACE would involve, volunteers were requested. The six volunteers with seniority (in keeping with union regulations) were chosen from this group. An attempt was made to get those who had had some experience teaching in a similar kind of setting. Five of these volunteers were trained during the summer. Of these, only three still wished to participate in the program when it started in the fall. As a result, three teachers had to be hired at the last minute with no prior training or orientation.

The Counseling Center. Of the eleven counselor-coordinators on the staff during the year, five had been on the staff the previous year and had been recruited and hired by the Chamber of Commerce. No formal recruitment procedures had been used by the GPCC. Individuals heard about the program through word of mouth or through informed university placement services, or were asked to apply by the vice president of the Chamber or by RBS staff.

No attempt was made to find persons who were formally certified. More weight in selection was given to their experience and to their reaction to the proposed program and their task. Those selected came from a variety of backgrounds--one having worked with the Boy Scouts Explorer program and another having been an editor for the Franklin Institute's Information Sciences unit dealing with drug and alcohol abuse information.

In order to fill the six positions remaining in the FY 1975 complement, the team leader and one other counselor interviewed about twenty applicants. Two vacancies which developed during the year were filled with the administrative head and the team leader separately interviewing several applicants. The standards originally used by the GPCC were applied.

## Assessment

RBS assesses all of its staff each year. (ARC instructors are not considered in this group.) Continuation, dismissal, promotion and pay raises are determined through this evaluation. A staff member's supervisor (the team leader for counselor-coordinators, and the administrative head for support staff) writes up a narrative description of the staff member's performance. Staff are judged on three criteria: (1) knowledge of the job, (2) problem-solving ability in the job, and (3) accountability. After the team leader submits his write-up it is discussed with the administrative head. Before any recommendations are sent to the appropriate executives in RBS, these and the overall evaluation are discussed with each staff member.

ARC instructor evaluation is the responsibility of the administrative head and the OHS principal. This assessment is more informal and is made on the basis of feedback the administrative head has received from students or other staff plus his own observations. It makes no use of student evaluation (except informally) or of self-evaluation (except as the final recommendations are discussed with individual staff members).

# Communication and Integration

Given the disparate administrative units involved in the operation of the ACE, and the commitment to individualization, communication and integration are major issues. This section sketches the machinery and processes of communication and the techniques contributing to, or detracting from, integration in several key areas of the program. No attempt has been made to keep the topics discussed here discrete or parallel.

## Conflicting Administrative Interests

In Chapter 4, the various administrative units with interests in the program were described. Conflict and overlap are inevitable. These evidence themselves both in operational logistics and in the kind of mentalities exhibited by individuals associated with each administrative sphere.

The administrative units are: employers represented by the GPCC; the on-site ACE staff; the RBS managerial staff; and OHS. Communication among the groups is complicated by the fact that only two of the four are located

on the same site and have opportunities for spontaneous interaction. More important, however, are the conflicting interests each unit has in the program. RBS is primarily concerned with operating a model career education program that addresses itself to some of the shortcomings of the public school system and other alternatives. Concomitant to this thrust, RBS hopes for a research and developmental spin-off. The experimental nature of the program involves the fairly constant presence of evaluators and frequent testing, observations, and interviews. Although sometimes distracting, most students accept the situation with aplomb, frequently joking about their role as "laboratory rabbits."

Employers and the GPCC have two major concerns: first, to identify and prepare a pool of potential employees that will be useful to them; and second, as part of their public relations, to perform a community service. Students feel little sympathy for the latter and the former is remote from their present situation. Student distance from employer concerns and the inevitable culture clash resulting from mostly Black urban teenagers interacting with predominantly White managers or executives cause occasional hostility and defensiveness. While employer site experiences are the best liked part of the program, students are sensitive to what they perceive as exploitation on the part of employers.

The main interests of Olney High School are to maintain traditional academic standards, to preserve the integrity of traditional school disciplines, and to minimize the number of grievances from the teachers' union. ARC instructors tend to see their jobs as those of typical high school teachers. They must contend with peer and union pressures, and at the same time perform their functions and maintain their professional standing. OHS sometimes tends to see the ACE as a place for problem students or those who are having academic trouble. Rarely does it encourage college-bound or "bright" students to enroll.

The ACE staff and students see the program itself as exciting, innovative and, in some sense, elite. They are jealous of their identity as "non-regular OHS". Several times second year students expressed resentment because they felt this year they were treated just like the rest of the students. The year before they had been housed off campus and had experienced a sense of community that was difficult to maintain when the ACE moved to Olney.

Communication between the ARC staff (who work for OHS) and the counseling staff is virtually nonexistant. There is no central record system housed in the ACE. Although instructors are paid to work overtime, during the period of observation by the ethnographers only one instructor attended two ACE staff meetings that were held. Some informal interaction takes place, usually when instructors check to see if absent students are in the counseling center. The two groups get together infrequently at official RBS functions.

The ACE, as an administrative unit, sees its role as that of providing a meaningful alternative educational experience for students. Counselor-coordinators find themselves in the role of student advocates--helping students put together individually tailored programs, aiding the inevitable "subversion of the system," and generally acting as liaison between students and employers on academic requirements. The first loyalty of counselor-coordinators is to the students, a situation that many students find easily exploitable. In addressing counselors, students use their first names. The ARC instructors insist that students address them with their titles and last names. Students spoke of their difficulty in making the changes required between dealing with the counselors and dealing with the instructors.

Because of the lack of communication, decisions are often made in an ad hoc fashion by counselor-coordinators who either seek after-the-fact approval or fail to communicate their decisions to all. Occasionally the results are rather tragic. In one case, two counselors promised a student he would graduate a semester early. This was not communicated to the instructors, or the promise was based on incomplete information. The student later found he would not graduate until the following semester. His keen disappointment bordered on a feeling of betrayal.

The situation can be summarized as one in which there are ambiguous lines of responsibility, conflicting loyalties, and a loose administrative model. With some exceptions, this modus operandi has resulted in few apparent serious problems and a fairly smoothly operating program. There is no way to determine what positive or negative programmatic effects would result if more formal and rigidly followed mechanisms of communication were deployed.

Counseling vs. Academics

A serious problem in the program does result from the lack of communication between the ARC and the counseling center from a student perspective. Student interests are affected in three areas: effective counseling; fair assessment; and the development of coherent, useful student programs.

Personal life situations and academic performance are closely related. Students with personal problems, whether school-related or not, are likely to find their academic performance deteriorating. Likewise, students doing poorly academically are good candidates to develop other difficulties. In the ACE, counselor-coordinators are responsible for guiding students' affective development. They are the most accessible of the staff to students, and the most willing to listen. However, they seldom have any direct acess to students' academic records and have little contact with their teachers. In giving direction or counsel they have to depend upon a student perception of academic standing and relationship with teachers. As a result, the counselor can seldom provide the kind of help a student needs in order to deal with school performance problems. Furthermore, this lack of input makes it difficult to counsel the student on making realistic career decisions, the counselor's primary task.

The same sort of problem exists with respect to assessment. Given the different relationships of counselors and instructors to students, and the radical differences between the basic skills classes and the career guidance classes, there is frequently little correlation between the grades students receive for the two types of courses. Neither grade may reflect the real quality of a student's efforts, and, more seriously, students may be left feeling that grading is arbitrary and capricious.

Finally, the lack of effective communication between the two program components makes it difficult for counselors to help students put together effective and coherent ACE programs. For example, the success of many career explorations demands that students possess specific academic skills. Counselors are unable to steer students into experiences they can best utilize, or help them make up skill deficiencies if they are not aware of these deficiencies.

In summary, it should be noted that although there is a serious lack of communication between the ARC staff and the counseling staff which prevents optimal integra-

tion of effort, the problem is more one of management than of design. The proposed joint staff meetings have seldom been held and a projected central record keeping system was not established. Plans exist to remedy these specific problems, though they have not been implemented.

Student Isolation

As indicated earlier, the general lack of integration between components of the program and the stress on individualization have the combined effect of making students feel isolated. This student perception surfaces at several points.

The students, who come from a tradition of more structured teaching where they interact with instructors in groups, find it difficult to develop learning strategies useful in the Academy. They are accustomed to working under close direction, and being evaluated by comparison with others and against an explicit set of objectives. They are ill prepared for the radically different set of the ACE, and nowhere is provision made to anticipate and address this problem. Some students thrive in the new context, but (predictably) others, with as much potential, flounder.

Another cause of the students' perceived isolation is their inability to understand the program's rationales. Why do instructors spend much time with some and little with others? Why do some get good grades and others poor grades for the same quality work? Why do employers give bad behavior grades? Why do counselors suggest one exploration to a certain student and another to a second? These are only samples of the kinds of questions which bedevil students as they attempt to get their bearings and learn how to live with the new system.

Finally, students find it hard to put together a supportive group of friends that they can attach themselves to as they move through the program. Due to the vicissitudes of scheduling they find themselves interacting with a shifting set of both peers and staff. There may be no one with whom they can comfortably share most of their experiences. Again and again students expressed concern over this. They would like to be able to have more small group work in the ARC, they would like to "rap" and share one another's cluster experiences in group guidance, and they would like to have cluster experience with their friends.

In summary, it appears that individualization of instruction can be a step in overcoming the anonymity that characterizes a typical urban high school. However, if it does not permit the development of ongoing, self-selected cliques or groupings, it can have the same or a similar effect on students. The scheduling and rostering practices of the ACE tend to create a sense of isolation in many students.

## Integration of Student Experiences

Another problem students face, related to their perceived isolation but qualitatively different from it, is that of integrating their total school-employer site experiences into a coherent meaningful program.

Few students seem to have any feel for the overall design of the ACE program, or even for their own part in it. They take classes and do other things which may or may not be of interest to them, but how these activities relate or fit together is seldom clear. This is probably characteristic of most school programs, and seeing how all the pieces fit together is, perhaps, a luxury afforded only by hindsight. However, participating in a coherent, rational program should be the rule, and developing an awareness of the program, a major goal of the educational experience.

This problem is most apparent in the career explorations. At best the brief explorations give students only a superficial feel for most jobs. Much of potential benefit of explorations is lost because there is no structured opportunity to share their experiences with each other and a counselor who has a feel for their total programs. This kind of an activity would afford a chance to explore, in depth, questions and suspicions about the job, as well as an opportunity for counselors to help students apply some of the more abstract information they have acquired in the guidance classes to concrete situations. This is simply one example of a scheduled, structured, small group interaction which could help students develop and "buy into" a clear, coherent, and integrated program. While some counselors did attempt to do something like this, it was not always possible since it was not formally part of the cluster experience.

## Record Keeping Procedures

A major deficiency in the program is the lack of a central record file which is easily accessible to counselors, instructors and other staff with direct student

involvement. Records of student progress in the ILA materials are kept in individual folders in the ARC. Attendance records are kept by the head secretary in the ARC. Counselors keep their own records of individual counseling sessions and group guidance classes. Employers record attendance and performance in explorations and specializations, which are turned in to the counselor-coordinators they work with. Appropriate individuals turn in grades periodically to be recorded by the OHS central office on report cards and stored in the central High School files. For a counselor or teacher to see the overall record of a student, he would have to go to the OHS central files and have someone pull the student's folder. This would be time consuming, and, because of the complicated procedure required for information to be transmitted and transcribed, the record would probably be incomplete. In addition, certain kinds of information useful to ACE staff are of not interest to the high school and would not be found in students' files.

Plans are presently underway to establish a central file system, containing records of a student's past experiences and regularly updated with information supplied by instructors, counselors and employers. This system will be housed in the ACE, readily accessible to all ACE staff.

Chapter 6

# ACTIVITY CYCLES

Students can theoretically elect to participate in the ACE for their entire four years of high school. However, due to the newness of the program, those enrolled during the period of ethnographic study, while representing ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, were all either first or second year participants.

## Overview Of Cycles

### Yearly Cycle

The ACE school year consists of three twelve-week terms. During each twelve week period a student must take basic skills courses in both English and mathematics. In addition, a student will take three classes in OHS each term. These will ideally be two majors and one minor. (The majors are traditionally academic courses, e.g., Spanish, French, Biology, Chemistry; the minors are courses such as physical education and health.) Typically, a student's in-school time each year would be evenly divided between the home school and the ACE.

Each term a student elects a career cluster of interest to him. For incoming students, the initial selection is done as part of the recruitment process. This cluster selection determines assignment to the career guidance class and exploration sites. During one or two of the three terms, a student may elect to specialize in a given occupation in lieu of the exploration. One term of specialization is required of second year participants.

### Weekly Cycles

The weekly schedule consists of four days at school and one day at an employer site. No explorations or specializations are scheduled for Mondays and Fridays, and these are days of heavy attendance at the ACE.

A typical student's weekly schedule might look like the following:

Sample Schedule

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thur | Fri |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Period | ARC Math. → | | Exploration or Specialization (at Employer Sites) | ARC Math. → | |
| 2nd Period | ARC English → | | | Arc English → | |
| 3rd Period | OHS Spanish → | | | OHS Spanish → | |
| 4th Period | OHS Gym → | | | OHS Gym → | |
| 5th Period | OHS Biology → | | | OHS Biology → | |
| 6th Period | Group Guidance | Counseling or Free | | Counseling or Free | Group Guidance |

Obviously, subjects would vary from student to student and the exploration/specialization might also be on either Tuesday or Thursday.

Daily Cycle

Days at the Academy begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 1:11 p.m. The day is divided into six 44-minute periods with no passage time between them. Although there is no period set aside for lunch, there is a ten minute snack break scheduled between ten and eleven. (No meals are served in the school, so students either bring snacks, buy them from a machine, or persuade a teacher to get them something during a free period.) At 10:00 a.m. a twenty minute advisory is scheduled for all students. At this time students report in groups to an instructor who takes roll for the day. Students go to group guidance only two periods a week. Since students are in school four days, they have two free periods each week. For example, if a student's group guidance class convenes during sixth period on Tuesday and Thursday, the student wll be free during the sixth period on Monday and Friday. The free period is intended to be used for individual guidance or for doing homework, but since free periods fall on the first or last period of the day, students frequently come late or leave early on those days.

The sequencing of classes varies from student to student. However, career guidance and the students' free time are always during either the first or sixth period, and the two ARC basic skills courses are usually scheduled back to back. This means that a student spends at least two periods straight in the ARC each day.

## Implications of Activity Cycles

Given the interrelatedness of the ACE and OHS, scheduling of classes and development of maximally useful student programs is a complicated task. The ACE staff make serious and honest efforts to create programs and schedules that afford students the best possible school experiences and are, at the same time, convenient. Although most of the OHS staff cooperate fully, students experience several kinds of frustrations. Reviewing some of the more typical is instructive.

### Lost OHS Class Time

Participation in the ACE means that students are away from school one day each week. This causes no problem in the ACE itself, since the one day at employer sites is scheduled as an integral part of the program. Both career guidance classes and ARC classes are designed to accommodate it. However, the regular home school classes are geared to a five day school week. Students who apply to the Academy are forewarned that if they are weak in academic subjects, the one day per week compulsory absence might prove a handicap. Some students express concern that in certain respects their absence does place them at a disadvantage.

Arthur, who is a very conscientious student, feels that his typing teacher penalizes him for missing the one day each week by claiming that he does not do enough work. Arthur says:

> The teacher knows I'm out of school one day a week. All my other teachers take that into consideration. He says he didn't know about this. But I saw him write it down.

For the most part, this problem is not serious, since OHS teachers are generally willing to cooperate and make allowance for the ACE participants.

## Conflict with OHS Extra-Curricular Activities

Another problem is the conflict between experience site obligations and home school extra-curricular activities. The career clusters are fairly rigidly scheduled for the same day of the week each term. Thus, if a student wishes to explore that cluster and go out for an extra-curricular activity scheduled for the same day, a difficult decision will be faced.

Arthur experienced this frustrating conflict as well. He was a member of the track team, and track meets were always held on Wednesday. Unfortunately, the career cluster he wanted most to participate in scheduled its explorations for Wednesday. Arthur was forced to change into another cluster.

This is not a pervasive problem, either, since most OHS staff can and will make some accommodation. The experience of Elaine, another ACE student, is more typical. She found that her track coaches were more than willing to give her extra practice time during an entire term so that she could pursue a specialization at a hospital.

## Overlapping Terms

ACE is on a three term year, while OHS is on a two semester system with two grade reports sent out every semester. This creates problems of administration and logistics, and indirectly leads to some student confusion. The major problem emerges in student assessment and grade reporting. When the first term of the ACE ends, students have to wait several weeks before their grade reports are issued, and the OHS report comes out in the middle of the next ACE term. As a result, report cards do not always reflect a student's current academic standing.

## Changing Cluster or Specialization

Several students have expressed frustration at the problem of being locked into an unchallenging or uninteresting specialization. Either because of schedule conflicts or lack of information, some students find it impossible to change in midstream to a specialization they think they might prefer. With respect to career clusters, students frequently find that their first choice for exploration is filled and that the alternatives are disappointing.

If the counselor-coordinators know about the problem they will attempt to help the student. Bob, for example, is obsessed with the idea of becoming a photographer. He waited patiently to get into a cluster which would allow him to use photographic equipment and to familiarize himself with the techniques and skills necessary for this career. Each quarter the cluster of his choice was filled. Finally, in his last quarter in the ACE, he went to a counselor with his problem.

> It's my last quarter and I have never gotten the chance to work in Communications which would let me work with a camera. If I don't get Communications now, I'll graduate never doing what I want.

He was promptly assigned to the Communications cluster even though it was filled.

## Isolation of Students

As a result of their varied commitments and idiosyncratic schedules, scheduling students into groups where membership does not change for each aspect of the program is difficult. As a consequence of scheduling problems, a student's individual counselor, guidance counselor and cluster coordinator may all be different. The constantly shifting set of staff and peers that students interact with may be perplexing, in that students may not know to whom to turn for advice and support.

Students often find themselves forced to interact for significant amounts of school time with others having few common ACE experiences. While this has the advantage of widening awareness, it reduces the possibility of discussing shared experiences. This is seen as a serious problem by students, who want genuinely to be with their friends. Their sense of isolation is real. Thus, students are tempted to seek out a cluster experience that allows them to be with friends rather than selecting on the basis of interest and need.

The system tries to compensate for fragmentation by affording many and regular opportunities for individual counseling. This does not work for every student. Those students with a degree of self-confidence who are visible and gregarious are able to establish stable relationships with counselors and peers. Those who lack this sense of self may have difficulty developing the needed relationships.

# CHAPTER 7

## STUDENT PROFILES

The profiles presented in this chapter are designed to accomplish several ends. First, as noted in Chapter 1, the goal of ethnographic evaluation is to present accurate descriptive analyses from which evaluative conclusions will emerge, leaving, insofar as possible, the matter of actual evaluation up to the reader. When ethnographers go beyond description in their reporting and draw conclusions, it is obviously desirable to have the conclusions supported by as much descriptive data as possible so that readers can judge their validity. These student profiles are designed to provide some of this background information.

Second, this ethnographic evaluation was designed to address a number of specific questions. The background and process analyses provided in the first six chapters have dealt with data bearing upon these questions. Since these questions concerned student perceptions of their experiences in the program, the profiles provide illustrations of the kinds of information used in preparing those descriptive analyses.

Third, it is impossible to present an accurate and integrated critique of the program by artificially segmenting out specific program features for discussion as we have done. A description of the experiences of several typical participants is one way to provide a context for the discussion of this educational program. We have let the students speak for themselves with no attempt to reconcile apparent contradictions or conflicts. In this way we hope to present a more integrated sketch of the program.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the presentation of these profiles is a tacit recognition of our own unease in deciding what is important or unimportant, significant or insignificant, negative or positive about the program. By getting some "feel" for what it is like to be a student, readers should be able to make their own judgements.

In summary, the profiles are presented in an attempt to add to the description, to provide documentation for the conclusions we have drawn, to illustrate what it is like to be a student for a number of different individuals,

and to provide a general, overall critique of the program including facets not singled out explicitly for attention in other sections of this report.

The eight subjects who are profiled were chosen to represent a cross section of the student population. They reflect the sex ratios and racial makeup of the student population, and represent various stages in the process of going through the program. They were not randomly selected and the constraints of time made it necessary to choose subjects who had fairly consistent records of attendance and who were willing to work closely with the investigators. This may have introduced some bias into the sample, but our intuitions, as well as those of the staff, suggest that they are a fairly representative cross-section.

## Dorothy

"...I learned a lot about myself..."

Dorothy came to the ACE from Cooke Junior High School, where she had been enrolled in a career education program. Just before junior high school graduation, she received a letter from the ACE inviting her to an orientation meeting. She came, applied, was accepted and enrolled.

Her prior experience in the junior high career education program had prepared her very little for the ACE program.

> It's very different from my junior high school, very different. We just stayed in school and did school things. It wasn't like going out to a cluster.

Dorothy has always enjoyed her school experiences. "I love school. I don't mind going at all." She is now in the eleventh grade and hopes to continue her education after graduating, in order to become a physical therapist. Although she was previously interested in health and health related professions, there is no doubt that the ACE has influenced her decision to become a therapist. She says,

> I became interested in physical therapy through the Academy when I went to cluster. Ever since that, one particular field has stuck in my mind.

Dorothy is happy with all of her employer site experiences. "I never miss my cluster days if I can help it." There were a few occasions when she could not attend, but these absences were not by choice. Indeed, she was outraged when a bus strike prevented her from one site visit.

On another occasion, her scheduled cluster day fell on her birthday.

> I wanted to take the day off to celebrate but I didn't want to miss my cluster, either, so I went to my employer site.

Dorothy did not always feel this way. While some students enter the ACE looking forward to their one day a week away from school, she was frightened about traveling around the city and meeting new people.

> I learned a lot about myself from being at the Academy. Meet different people. Talk with different people about different ideas. I used to be scared. One time I met the vice president of Acme Markets. When I was in the ninth grade if someone told me I was going to meet the vice president of a company I would have been scared stiff. But now I was so comfortable and at ease when I talked to him. We talked like we had known each other for years anyway.

She makes the most of her experiences at the employer sites.

> When I'm at a cluster I really like to get involved. I try to take full advantage of everything around me. The ACE is for my benefit so I try to take advantage of everything they offer me.

Dorothy asks incisive and direct questions. She appreciates employers' attempts to teach her and comments frequently on a cluster's learning activities. "The people at McGuire Air Force Base really try to inform you about careers." About Acme's program, she says, "They were so friendly and aware of student's needs. They filled the day with interesting and fun things to do."

Her exploration and specialization experiences have benefited her in many ways. They have helped her to make a more realistic and informed decision about her career

and she has become more confident and secure traveling in the city and meeting new people.

Dorothy was initially drawn to the program because it offered her an opportunity to work at her own pace.

> I think this environment is better. You know, sitting in an English class [traditional] and somebody asks a question and you already know it. It works on your nerves. When I entered the Academy I had no idea I would have to take so many tests. My results on the test weren't what I expected. They were low for my grade at the time, but if you test me now you would see a hell of a big difference. Right now I feel proud of myself. I improved myself in many ways. Not only in school subjects but a lot of other things. I know that there's more for a female to do than just get married. There's careers for you to get into.

Dorothy has been dating a boy for several months. She thinks that she might want to marry him someday but she would rather wait.

> We sat down like two adults and we arrived at the conclusion that marriage is a very big step and at this time in our lives, it wouldn't be the sensible thing to do. I'm still in school and have one more year to go. I expect to go to college.

She likes being able to come right into the ARC and begin work without having to wait for direction from a teacher. This, she feels, may have required a little adjustment on her part, but the system is suited to her needs and she likes it. In this, as in several other behaviors, she contrasts sharply with her sister Alvina, who came into the program at the urging of Dorothy and her mother, and, who, according to Dorothy,

> ...didn't like the idea. She still doesn't like the idea of having to come in and work on her own. She likes to come in and have somebody tell her what to do. I'm just the opposite of that.

In a more general vein, Dorothy says:

> I like everything about the Academy except for the math. You should have teachers talkin' to you like in a class. That's the only flaw in the program. I'm satisfied with everything else. Not all the clusters are going to be perfect. And I'm satisfied with English, but in math I would prefer to have a classroom situation. Some of my teacher's classes are so large that when you call him it'll be fifteen minutes before he gets to you to help solve that problem so that you can go on. And if you get stuck on this page you know you can't go on to the next page. You've got to wait. So sometimes I feel like I'm not getting enough attention, and then I feel like there should be two teachers to every class so they can get around to everybody.

She also objects to the credit awarding system.

> Suppose you have no fundamentals in geometry. You have general math and you get credit for geometry. That's what I don't like about it.

Dorothy's criticisms are those reiterated time and again by other students. Mathematics should be taught in small groups. There should be a larger teaching staff on duty. The grading system should be made clearly understood.

Instructors are positive in their evaluations of Dorothy. She has accomplished everything expected of her in math, and has "progressed nicely through algebra" despite her feelings about the course.

In English, she is almost at grade level. She recently completed the ILA program, and will earn a "B" or a "C" as a final grade. Her English teacher says, "Dorothy has a good sense of humor, somewhat giggly and flighty, but so are most 16 year old girls. She reads well and is fairly articulate, fair in writing ability with an awful oral grammar."

Dorothy's group guidance counselor sees her as an aggressive, self-directed student. She participates in group discussions with "elaborate and appropriate responses." She is unusual in that she likes to take copious notes in guidance class, to question and to add to other students' comments. At times temperamental and flip, she tries to suppress her desire to "get smart".

She is sometimes considered a "teacher's pet" and enjoys the attention this brings. When denied attention she sometimes responds by denigrating the work or comments of other students.

Dorothy is, by and large, an effective and self-motivated student with a responsible and enthusiastic attitude toward school. In comparison to her sister, who is often late for class and has a reputation for talking during math and English, Dorothy declares,

> I don't like to be late. Being late is like getting a cut. I'd rather not go to school at all than to be late. Nothing can stop me from accomplishing what I have to do.

Dorothy's experience appears to confirm the observation of one counselor, who maintains,

> You have to be a very strong student and highly motivated to overcome the distractions of peers and the desire to socialize that often weakens the productivity of some students.

Dorothy, like many other students who started in the program when it was located downtown, feels that a certain pride and freedom in the Academy is now missing. "Getting out of Olney" played a large part in attracting students. Now she feels "taken advantage of" because of the move.

Despite this disappointment, Dorothy, who is known for her candidness, is quick to praise the Academy. It has been good for her.

## Charles

"...to see for yourself what it's really like..."

There's a quiet intensity about Charles which is immediately noticeable as he goes about his work in the ARC. While others chat, Charles sits, with one arm bent, chin resting on his palm, calmly shutting out the din surrounding him. He works assiduously, occasionally looking up to make a comment to his friend William, who is usually by his side. His teacher breaks in on his concentration, "What is that you are reading, Charles?"

"It's a book about drugs by an anthropologist." Charles looks over his shoulder and then continues with his reading.

At the bell, he slowly moves out of the room into the hall. He is a small, slender boy with long brown hair. His clothes are casual, usually dungarees and a shirt. Charles is White and he socializes with only a few other students, rarely involving himself in school activities. Nevertheless, he is well-liked. He is an amiable person--never too noisy or active, always working or appearing to.

Charles wants to be a horticulturist or work in forestry. He is deeply concerned about ecology and will share his interest with anyone who wants to listen. He plans to attend a college in Maine where he can major in Environmental Science.

Charles has not always had a good attitude toward school. As a junior high school student, he was bored and uninterested.

> I didn't learn anything. I was very turned off to school and very prejudiced towards Blacks. I've recovered fully from both. I used to play hooky and cut. I was caught by the police once and returned to school. I began smoking dope in the summer between seventh and eighth grades. I never even realized what it was all about. I never come to school "high" now, because it makes my mind wander--except for once in a while.
>
> I heard about the Academy like Dorothy did. I heard that you got chosen by lottery. I figured I would see what it was all about and here I am. I like it and I'm happy about the decision. I wanted to come because I could go to the clusters which meant being away from school one day a week.
>
> Going out into the city and away from school is great. I don't think the Academy really had anything to do with my changed feelings about myself, not really. But it taught me more about what I want to do. For instance, when I went to the finance cluster I realized that I didn't like it and I wasn't interested in doing that.

The main value of his employer experiences seems to have been in showing him what he doesn't want to do, but he has followed each one of them through consistently. While at a local nature center, Charles was given only menial chores to do. He was rarely allowed the chance to work with animals, which disappointed him. When he confronted a counselor about his frustration, he was told that there was nothing anyone could do for him but that, "the next student would benefit from his feedback."

So he continued his tedious and uninteresting work until his next assignment came through. He hoped this would be more interesting. It was to be a specialization at an arboretum. It proved as dull and unchallenging as the nature center. Charles patched walls in a rose garden and sometimes helped to plant or spray trees. Neither of the employer-coordinators worked with him or gave him any specific assignments to do. They were content if he just came and worked, often by himself, for several hours each day.

Although he found the setting pleasant, he did not enjoy the kind of learning experience he had. He can remember only one interesting thing he did. "I helped to plant a tree!" When the field worker visited the site, he pointed to it with pride, explaining how he, with a caretaker and his friend William, had dug the hole and placed the tree in it.

Despite his disappointment, Charles still maintains, "Wednesdays are my favorite days because I get to spend the day at the arboretum." He is even planning to intern at the arboretum for the summer.

Charles' worst academic subject is math. It is not certain whether this stems from a lack of interest or an inability to do the work. His math teacher thinks that, "he is not very bright or able." He plods along, though, and despite the little progress is diligent in doing the work. He is rarely absent, and because of his consistency and his responsible attitude he has been passed each term.

He and his math teacher have radically different perceptions of the problem. In addition to feeling that Charles is not very bright, the teacher says, "He would have been lost in a traditional classroom." Charles counters,

> It's easy. I'm beginning to understand it, but I don't like it. If I've abused my freedom in the program anywhere, it's been in the math class. I haven't worked as hard as I should. I know it. I haven't progressed in math. But one of the good things about the program is that if you're absent, like in math, I don't have to worry about catching up. If I'm out I start where I stopped. I like not having people standing over me. The freedom is great. I do well in school except for algebra.

This assessment agrees with that of the other instructors. They see him as a good student, dependable and hard working. In fact, his English teacher says,

> I love him. He is bright and clever and one of the best brains in here. Charles would do well in any environment. He is self motivated and in this respect the Academy is good for him. He seems to like being here.

In guidance class he responds frequently, leaving his counselor with the impression that he follows through on his activities. In fact, she sees him as a dependable, serious student. (This is an impression he actively tries to convey, being one of the few students rarely seen with a load of books.) Charles, himself, feels that guidance classes have helped him.

> It's taught me how to ask myself questions, to find out what I really want to know. It's helped me subconsciously. I can't do it on paper but I can in my head, it comes naturally sort of.

Both Charles and the staff feel that he has benefited from the ACE, although he has often expressed boredom with some parts of it and with his home school classes. His capacity for self direction enables him to pick and choose, enjoying those things that are of interest and use, while tolerating those that are tedious and frustrating.

He sums his feelings up in his journal,

> The Academy is better than a regular school because, you know, when most kids graduate from high school they don't really know what they want to do. They have some vague idea, maybe, but in the Academy you get the chance to go around and see for yourself what it's like to work in the place you think you might like. And then you really know.

## Maria

> "...it's the best experience I ever had in my life!"

Sitting at a table in the middle of a group of girls, Maria's brown curly hair and lustrous dark eyes frame a friendly engaging smile. She is described by others as forthright and honest, a girl who "lets you know how she feels." Maria is well liked by her peers and the staff.

Maria was born in Philadelphia, as were three of her brothers and sisters. Her oldest brother and parents were born in Puerto Rico. Only she and her younger brother remain at home.

She belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and this plays an important part in her life. Maria also has an excellent relationship with her parents, who she feels understand her. She admires their patience and selflessness. Of her life and her family, she writes in her journal:

> My life is beautiful. I think you can see that. My family is really big. Mother and father are super parents. I really love them. I went to so many elementary schools, I can't remember them all... This is my last year in school and I entered the Academy this year--my senior year. I've traveled a lot including a visit to Puerto Rico and have learned a lot from my traveling experiences. I also have a wonderful boyfriend and we plan to be married next year.

Maria's first language is Spanish, and this has caused her some difficulties with English. However, she has worked hard and feels she has made good progress.

Surprisingly, her greatest difficulty in school is with her foreign language requirement. She is taking Spanish, and the Spanish she speaks at home interferes in learning the dialect taught at school.

Her feelings about the ACE are strong--and positive. In fact, she feels that it could benefit many other students in Philadelphia.

> I wish this program could be given to other students. It has helped me learn better English and I have also learned a lot about different places in the city. Though I want to go to Temple University and become a gym teacher, some of the experiences I have had in other occupations has taught me a lot.

One of these experiences was her specialization in electrical work at the Navy Yard. She worked as an apprentice learning about electrical construction. At first it was frightening, a lot of men and a new place. But she adapted quickly and now likes to talk about it.

> Though the first guy I went to there didn't teach me that much, the guy I went with the last day I was there taught me a lot. He showed me how to clean parts and put them back together. Lunch time with all the fellows was super. They treated me like one of the guys.

Maria, like Dorothy, has learned that women have a greater range of career choices than she had suspected. While she enjoyed this specialization, she voluntarily cut it three weeks short because she felt she had learned all she could from it and needed to concentrate upon her basic skills classes.

This is a typical move for Maria. She consistently works hard, studying after school as well as during class. Although vivacious, outgoing, and prone to talk, she seldom gets in trouble with the instructors.

Her English has improved steadily and she normally scores between 80 and 100 on her tests. Nevertheless, she will not graduate until the end of summer school.

Staff reactions to Maria are mixed. Some feel that she is overly sensitive, unable to take criticism well. Others characterize her as just the opposite--a well adjusted, mature student.

She is very fond of her English teacher and relates well to her. The two have an openly affectionate relationship.

> The program is really helping me out in some of my English, like spelling, grammar and many other things. My English teacher is really a super teacher. If there were more like her school would be more enjoyable.

Her feelings about the math teacher appear to be more ambivalent. She would really like to get more attention.

> ...[the math teacher] kind of always acts in a superior way--acting so high about herself... messes around a lot and doesn't spent much time helping us. ...I hope you understand that math can be fun sometimes and sometimes be one of the most boring days.

The math teacher agrees that, "I haven't spent as much time as I would like with my geometry students." Thus, despite Maria's conscientious approach and her ability to adapt quickly to the ARC approach, she has had trouble with math. In this case the fault does not seem to be hers.

Her strongest praise is reserved for the employer site aspects of the program.

> The program helped me to decide on what I really like to do. It's been really nice that the school can give us this nice program. English and math may not be good but when you go to your cluster you're really learning something.

During lunch one day at the Navy yard, Maria expressed her perceptions of the program:

> The program helps us to understand better what it is like outside of school. In school, if you do something wrong you get into big trouble. While you are out of school if you make a mistake you don't get in any kind of trouble. The program can help you in deciding what you want to be and the education you will need.

Maria also profited greatly from the guidance class:

I enjoy talking about what a person will do in his life, and the cost. I really learned that I wanted a lot--a small car, a small house and some nice furniture. I learned that in four years, if I work and save, I could have all of that. It's really interesting how the program can show you how to save and work for everything you want in your life.

While Maria's experience at the ACE has not been all successes, she is clear evidence that a positive attitude, hard work, and motivation can go a long way. In addition to the advantages she has already listed, Maria has used the Academy to make and enrich friendships--friendships which will probably be lasting.

Her feelings as she sums them up are:

I enjoy being here and getting to meet new people. That's the best thing that's happened to me in my whole life.

## Peter

"...one school is like another..."

Peter (Slick) is an eleventh grader who was recruited from Olney Annex. He is the third of five children, and he identifies with his two older brothers. One is an electrician who attends a nearby vocational school where on alternate days he works and attends classes. He is compensated for his on-the-job training. His oldest brother attends another community based vocational education program. "Slick" himself would prefer to be in Dobbins Vocational School, for there he feels he could at least work at electronics, his preferred trade.

Peter's attitude toward school has always been and still is one of indifference:

The Academy is like any other place. Why leave and lose all that time? I think it's a little easier to learn here, but they're all the same.

This indifference has not gone unnoticed. The counseling staff feels that "Slick" considers his experiences at the Academy as insignificant. His relationship with

his individual counselor is clearly not the best. She is angry with him and feels betrayed.

> He's not straight with me. It's as if he's trying to get away with stuff all the time. I don't mind if a student wants to voice boredom or indifference, as long as he is truthful. Peter seems to pretend one thing, he means another, and I don't like that. He plays cat and mouse games.

One of her complaints is that he never shows up for individual counseling, which Peter admits without explanation or excuse, "I don't even go to the counselors."

He has an equally poor attendance record in his cluster activities. This is unusual. Most students enjoy their cluster--not "Slick".

> The last time I picked a cluster, transportation, it was full and I didn't want no other one. Why should I waste my time going to a cluster I didn't want.

Each day he would claim that he had a doctor's appointment that kept him home. He was asked to bring a note from the doctor, which he couldn't get.

"Slick" says that he would find his cluster experiences worthwhile,

> ...if I could have all trade clusters. I want to be a carpenter or electrician or work in electronics--and that's what I want to do.

Paradoxically, "Slick" attends his guidance classes although he feels, "the stuff they do in there is stupid. I go 'cause I got to go. I failed history already 'cause I didn't go to my cluster. If I fail too many of my other classes...."

"Slick" is not disliked by the staff. Although he bewilders some and angers others, there is one instructor with whom he has developed a warm and affectionate relationship. In one conversation, he contrasted his math and English instructors:

> I think math and English are all right. I think it's easier to learn them in the Academy. I don't like Mr. A. He gives me work. I do it. But he doesn't

really teach me. That time he made me take off my hat when all the dudes were wearing them... I don't like him.

But Miss D, . . . that's the way all teachers should be. If all teachers were like her everybody would finish high school, nobody would drop out. When you can work and talk and understand each other.

Miss D feels that Peter is a bright and charming boy. She acknowledges that he does not respond enthusiastically to school work but points out that when he is stimulated he will work hard--even staying after school. She feels that he is a capable student.

Oh, he's a good student. But I have to convince Peter that what we're doing is worthwhile. He can handle the work. He's bright.

At a staff meeting, convened to evaluate students and decide who should be dropped from the program, the staff, with the exception of Miss D, agreed that he should leave. The staff were not sure he wanted to stay, and when one of them asked him he said, "No." When asked by the anthropologist if he wanted to leave he said he'd like to stay, simply because, "why lose all that time?" Ironically, he was asked to leave because his poor attendance in Miss D's class (his favorite teacher and friend) forced her to fail him.

Peter is an active gang member and his first loyalties are to his "boys". Although he claims to have "calmed down" during the last quarter, his outside interests keep him from getting too involved in school. ("I love partying best of all!")

He completed the ILA program and then, because he requested it, was allowed to take a course in Algebra II. There is little doubt that Peter is capable of doing the work, and, given the right instructors, could become enthusiastic about the academic program. However, his tough exterior frightens people away.

Both his English and math teachers feel that he is one student for whom the ACE is not suited. Mr. A says,

> He needs to be sat on. He has no self discipline, though he is a fairly bright student who can concentrate when he wants to, he constantly needs reinforcement.

The question is still open as to whether Peter will be accepted into the Naval Program at the Annex next year, and more importantly, whether this time it will be different. One wonders whether for "Slick" any school can be better than the ones he has experienced.

## Paul

"I'm glad I stuck it out."

Paul is one of the students who is outstanding in everyone's opinion. Bright, charming, perceptive, sensitive and charismatic, he is, in many ways, the perfect student. One counselor even contends, "He's the best student I have had anywhere." This reputation is stained by only one major flaw--he is lazy and doesn't work up to his potential.

A Junior, Paul is in his second year at the ACE. He came from a junior high school which demanded much from its students, and accepted the invitation to apply to the ACE because, "It seemed like a good idea to get out of school one day a week."

Paul's attitude toward school conflicts with his career goals. He would like to go to college and become a psychologist, but the idea of following a rigorous academic program is not appealing to him. He is continually distracted by outside interests. In fact, he give the following as an additional reason for coming to the Academy:

> I wanted to be more involved in a social life. I knew that Olney could not offer me good academic training, but I wanted to meet lots of girls and make new friends.

Paul is the next to youngest of five children. At 16 he is well-built and handsome-experimenting with his manhood. For all his apparent intellectual maturity and the easy way he interacts with adults, he has trouble with his peers. He comes across as a tease--defensive in a way and superficial. In class he always seats himself next to a female student with whom he can joke and talk.

I'm always messing around with a cute girl.
I get bored if there isn't a girl around.

Paul's social interests have detracted from his school work. Despite this, he has no difficulty impressing teachers and maintaining a respectable grade average. His explanation is illuminating:

I'm doing the same work here that I did in junior high. I got by there without doing too much extra work and it was hard. They demanded a lot from us. Here I'm just repeating the same work. Until now. Things are starting to get harder and I guess I'm going to have to work harder next year.... I've been doing homework since last quarter, though; before that I just went to class.

Interestingly, Paul has never participated in sports or other organized extra-curricular activities although he has the time and likes to socialize.

I couldn't commit myself to one thing.
I guess I'm not mature enough.

Paul has always read voraciously. This, plus the ease with which he gets by and the freedom of the ARC, explain both his feelings about the academic side of the Academy and the instructors' reactions to him. Paul says of the ARC,

I'm bored with math. It's idiot work. English is too easy. I've read most of the books before and my teacher rarely gets around to me because he's too busy helping kids work with the ILA.

His math teacher recognizes the problem and has taken a personal interest in Paul.

He works well on his own. He really doesn't need much prodding. He has learned a lot on his own. At one point, though, he wasn't doing enough and I called his home and asked his parents to see that he worked a little harder. As a result of his not doing enough work he is getting only an average grade. He has a very good math ability and would have done better in a classroom with a lot of pressure.

> He has not worked up to his potential. It's partly my fault. There's been no proper planning and the program needs revamping. Paul can get by with doing as little as he has because he is capable. He has learned on his own....The school itself does not provide an environment suited to stimulating education. There's a certain tone and attitude....It's a shame Paul didn't get as far as he could have.

His English teacher is also impressed with his ability.

> It was fun to work with Paul. He could do better....There's a certain lazy streak in him. He's bright and could use the competitive spirit of a more tranditional classroom.

Paul's favorite subject is Spanish and he works on it by the hour. He hopes to work as an interpreter this summer because he thinks it will be good training for the future. He requested a specialization at a school where he would be able to work with Spanish speakers but he was frustrated by the experience he had because it afforded him little opportunity to actually work with his Spanish. Two exceptions stand out. On one occasion when he was asked to tutor a child who was having trouble, he was exhuberant over the experience.

> One student could not read the books so I helped him translate the story into Spanish when he was having trouble. It was exciting and I felt so good. Like I had really helped someone.
>
> Then another time, I overheard a conversation between some kids in Spanish and they didn't know that I could understand them so I answered them in Spanish and they were really excited.

Unfortunately, his site experience at the school became so tedious that Paul asked for a transfer. His new assignment was no better.

> It's worse there. I do the same thing all day long. And that's not much. But I asked for the change so it's my own fault.

Incidentally, this last statement is characteristic of Paul. He seldom blames others or "the system" for his problems. Despite this evidence of maturity, Paul stands on the thin line between childhood and adulthood. His gentle charm endears him to the staff and, being responsive and sensitive, he invites adult treatment. At times though, he becomes shy and retiring.

His counselor characterized his participation in group guidance.

> He is always articulate....He participates with intelligent sensitive comments. He is punctual and attends regularly.

The value of his ACE experiences are difficult to assess. The time spent in developing social skills has paid off. He is more self-assured, and, if possible, even more gentle and charming. He has been both enriched and cheated by his time in the Academy. His unique talents have in large measure gone undeveloped due to his own laziness and an overworked staff who couldn't give him the time they would have liked. His obvious ability elicited conflicting responses. Some staff made greater demands of him because they thought he could come through. Others, delighted to have a bright student who demanded little attention, left him on his own.

Although he has received recognition as an ideal ACE student for his self-motivation, sense of responsibility, and intelligence, he has not responded with added hard work. In his own words he needs to get "turned around" if he is going to be what everyone thinks he can be.

Paul feels his Academy experiences have been good on the whole. "I'm glad I stuck it out," he says. He expects to return for his senior year, hopefully with a new approach.

> I'm going to work harder and concentrate a lot better. I want to go to college. I've changed. A lot of things I was interested in last year have changed. I had to get it out of my system. I can do my best in the Academy and at the same time get exposure to the working world.

## Mae

"I'm not ready for anything else"

Mae has been described by her counselor as "a grandmotherly girl," and by her teachers as a girl "who seems a lot older than she is." Her attitudes and interests may reflect the fact that she lives with a grandmother. Mae has a strong interest in the church, especially the Gospel choir, which demands much of her time. In addition to singing and practicing for the choir, she works afternoons and evenings at a fast food restaurant.

Mae enrolled in the ACE because she felt that she was "not ready for anything else". It gives her an opportunity to get out into the world and see things.

Her present career goal is to be a physical therapist or to work with children in some capacity.

> I really want to work with children, either retarded children or children who are sick. I want to give them loving care because I really like them. I've known for a long time that's what I want to do.

Mae is a voluble and gregarious girl, short and a little too heavy. She is not considered one of the "brighter" students, reading and writing at about the fifth or sixth grade level. She occasionally becomes withdrawn, and then shifts suddenly, becoming very aggressive. Although generally liked by the staff, there is a distant quality about her that makes intimate, intense relationships difficult.

Some of the inner fears and insecurities underlying this demeanor are revealed in a journal entry describing her feelings on waking one morning:

> I thank God for letting me see another day. I was so nervous and scared this morning I didn't want to get out of bed. But I put my trust in the Lord and He will see me through.

Despite the weaknesses in her academic background, Mae responds fairly well to the ARC approach and is an adequate student. Her English teacher contends that she is capable and can work well.

> She breezed through the ILA, although she has trouble transferring the skills she learns and putting them into use. Her grammer is poor. She works but seems to have no personal motivation. She works to get a grade but not because she really enjoys the work or wants to learn. Mae seems to have lost her youth. She lacks the enthusiasm and vibrance, the carefree exuberance of some of her peers. Although she is an ace at grammar (in the written lessons) and completed the ILA quickly, she does not speak in complete sentences.

Mae says of her English class,

> I did real good in English on my report card and my other subjects but I guess I deserved it. I learned that you got to put in to get something out.

She had a "personality conflict" with her first math teacher and asked to be transferred from his class. ("He started jumping down on me for no reason at all.") Her new math teacher likes Mae.

> She's a nice girl. No trouble. She tries and I go over her work with her and she's learning. I think she does better in this environment than she would in any other.

Mae reciprocates this friendship because, "she is nice and takes time to explain things to me that I do not know."

Her guidance counselor finds Mae a proud girl, who covers her weaknesses and lack of confidence with a defensive, demanding tone. A problem she had with a textbook illustrates this. Her clerical practice text was stolen. She refused to buy another one although the lack of a book was causing her to fail. Her refusal was adamant until a counselor called her grandmother. She insisted that the program owed her a book since she had already bought one. Once making this demand, her pride wouldn't let her back down, even if it meant failure. Mae likes her guidance class, however.

> Guidance is always interesting, finding and learning different things of the world today. I would like to be something when I get out of school, not no salesgirl but something I like and people in the world today.

Mae has few criticisms of the ACE. She has little confidence in her ability to control her own life or her right to question what happens to her. She feels that by "being nice" to everybody she can avoid trouble. One suspects that this attitude masks a lot of frustration and insecurity for although normally cheerful and pleasant, she can suddenly become sullen and withdrawn.

This erratic behavior was a problem in her cluster experiences. She did a specialization at a children's hospital where she was assigned to the pharmacy. It was an unsatisfactory experience. Her supervisor decided she was "not suited to the job," and Mae felt it was boring. She couldn't get along with the pharmacy staff.

Despite the unhappiness she felt, she suffered in silence. Finally, Mae decided to speak to her counselor who found that there was a misunderstanding on the part of the supervisor. The supervisor didn't know that Mae was there on a career specialization, assuming instead that she was simply one of the 200 or so volunteers the supervisor had to take care of. By the time the problem was identified, it was too late to change things. Had Mae been less insecure and frightened she would have taken a different tack.

Mae's position in the ACE is ambiguous. She stands somewhere between the successful Paul and the failing Peter. Whether she gets through, and where the program will lead her, will depend upon her tenacity.

## Kennard

"I don't understand...."

"This year is a lot different from last year. A lot more people, a lot more confusion." The change in staff and move to Olney were difficult for Kennard. "I don't like it at all. I'm right back where I started last year. I'm just hangin' on."

Ken wears the mask of an indifferent, lackadaisical man who cares for nothing. Behind it all is a sensitive person who cares deeply but who is insecure and frightened, unsure of his values and of his abilities. He confided in his journal,

> Sometimes I wonder what it's all about. I wonder why I keep trying. I even thought about ending it....I don't know.

Kennard is the oldest of five brothers and sisters, and is burdened by his position. He feels a real responsibility to act as an example for his younger siblings, to protect them from the outside world, and to bridge the gap between them and their parents.

He is searching for something, and has been led to examine a number of religious doctrines-Baptists, Black Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses. He has come to believe that all faiths have the same thing to say. He was most intrigued by the Black Muslims, but found the rigor they demanded too much for him.

Partly as a reaction to his parents and a frustrating home life, Kennard works after school at two jobs. From 1:30 to 6 o'clock he is a messenger and from eight to midnight a janitor. His parents were strict and protective, refusing to let him participate in sports, "They wouldn't let me run or do sports, they were afraid I'd get hurt." He can't wait to get out and make his own decisions.

Kennard lacks the strong motivation necessary to work well in the ARC, though he does respond to attention. One instructor observed:

> If I sit with Ken the whole period and explain or just sit next to him, he'll work the whole time, otherwise, forget it.... He loses interest and feels defeated and stops.

He had turned off to school this year. He wasn't doing any work. He felt that none of the teachers cared--not just this year but for most of his student life. This attitude stems from a history of perceived indifference by teachers:

> I guess it started when I was real little. I used to study, I used to be gettin' my thing together. I used to be raising my hand all the time. No one ever called on me. I figured why do all this studying. I'm not called on or nothin' like that. After years, I just went downhill. I used to go to school in north Philly and I moved up here and that threw me off a little more, 'cause of a whole change in systems.

Kennard wanted and needed special attention that a traditional school environment had not been able to offer him. He expected the ACE to be different, and his first year's experience was gratifying. This year, however, was a real disappointment.

> Last year the teachers would sit down with you and explain something deep as they could, it's not so this year. This year the teachers talk to you two seconds and then they're bolting somewhere else. The teachers last year were nicer anyway, more concerned.
>
> I went to Fitsimmons Junior High. Down there I was doing the same math I'm doing here. This is like a broken up system here. I was learning more down there than up here. Down there I was constantly achieving something. Here I've lost my interest in everything. And the way my marks are goin' now I don't know if I'll be out of here soon. If I had to take this again, it'd be better on me, 'cause I don't have an understanding of this anyway. Another year wouldn't hurt, it would help more than anything. If I hyped myself up, maybe I could pull my marks up to passing.
>
> It's hard to concentrate and I see the same material I had in sixth grade. It doesn't make any sense. I would like it here too if they just did things a little differently. If a few of us could work together and we'd catch on a little better.

Kennard is particularly keen on the idea of small groups. He has suggested reading plays together or discussing stories for English. Math would be easier because he could have more of the teacher's time. He also misses the blackboards and other paraphernalia of traditional schools.

However, he is more concerned with the ways teachers treat him. Bordering on the edge of manhood, he is sensitive to being treated like a child. He says, "I haven't raised my hand for years."

The clusters have been enjoyable and useful for him. They have raised his self esteem and have given him chances to get out into the world denied him by his strict parents.

Counselors urged Ken to explore different careers. He was really only interested in one area--electrical work. Attracted to it since junior high school, his parents discouraged him from really pursuing the interest because they feared it would be dangerous. His counselors tried to get him a specialization in electrical construction but were unable to do so. He did an exploration at the Naval Base that was disappointing because he couldn't be directly involved with electrical work.

Kennard has some very sophisticated and insightful observations to offer with respect to the ACE in general. He is not sure he is clear on what it offers or expects from students. Although the experiential aspects hold promise, they don't always deliver. More teachers who really understand the objectives of the program are needed. Instructors pulled from the public schools don't have the understanding.

To some extent Kennard has lost faith in the program, feeling that it has not lived up to his expectations. Furthermore, he does not have the personal resources to overcome its weaknesses.

Kennard and Harold are "homeys"--they pal around together. Harold's strength, as well as his bitterness towards the ACE, are described in another profile. When together the two often denigrated their experiences. However, while Harold continues to make his "negative experiences" work for him, Ken allows them to defeat him. Harold decided not to take the RBS evaluator's post-tests because there was nothing in it for him. Ken followed suit. Then Harold, having second thoughts and not wanting to be penalized for his stance, decided to take them. Ken held fast, and out of loyalty to Harold still refused. As a result Kennard is looked upon as rebellious, uncooperative and cynical. In fact, he feels betrayed and confused.

He graduated this term and hopes to get into the United Negro Worker's Union as an electrician's apprentice. He wants only to be an electrician, to work in construction. It was suggested that he aim higher--to electronics. His insecurity and lack of self assurance keep him from these aspirations. He thinks he might like electronics, but he's going "to take it a step at a time."

## Harold

"I feel that dealing with the Academy faculty has given me the opportunity to learn about lying, slick employers."

Harold describes his beginning in the ACE the previous year:

> When I heard about the Academy I thought it was a private high school restricted to a select group of highly intelligent upper class Whites. At first I wasn't going to apply, figuring I wouldn't be accepted, but the desire for a real educational experience inspired me to try. During the summer I was contacted by the school telling me about a meeting which was going to be held at Olney. I was chosen, obviously, and went to a meeting at Broad and Locust where I was given a lot of tests.
>
> The first year I had an identity crisis. You see we were the first Olney students to attend and the other students felt we were intruders.

During this first year Harold came to enjoy the academic program. "The ARC was one of my best learning experiences. The teachers made you want to learn and we profited from it."

His first cluster experience was an eye-opener:

> My first cluster experience was very uptight for me and unorganized for the employer. Though in that cluster I experienced everything from the United Farm Workers to the Teacher's Federation, and like the Farm Worker's building which in contrast to the others was just an ordinary house. People were not dressed in suits nor did they have a receptionist. They were only being paid five dollars a month. I learned how these people were harassed by police and members of the teamster's union. I found this fascinating--to see that my people aren't the only ones being harassed and looked down upon.

> My best cluster was the health cluster. I worked in so many different places. The chemistry cluster was dull, a complete disappointment. No hands-on experience.

Harold also found guidance classes useful and challenging:

> At first guidance classes were a complete waste of time, just keeping log sheets. Then we got into rap sessions and we'd argue about everything and the counselors would make a lesson of it.

Despite this positive introduction to the ACE, he has been very unhappy with the changes this year.

> Towards the end (of this first year) we were told there would be some changes for the better. Well in my opinion, they were for the worse.

Harold's journal entries reveal an unusual sophistication and perceptiveness in sizing up staff and the program. He described his counselor as follows:

> My guidance counselor enters the room. He is a short, Black bearded man with a good head on his shoulders. He advances to the front of the class and by the use of hand gestures, and various voice intonations he develops a rapport with the class.

He is equally adept at analyzing his own situation and at exploiting resources. This skill elicits two divergent interpretations. Some of the staff see him as bright and manipulative, seeking only to make the best of every context. Others see him as power hungry, trying to control situations.

> Harold is aggressive and active in student affairs. ....like, I am managing editor of the Academy Newspaper and chairman of the student advisory right to voice their opinions in school activities.

This aggressive sociability has attracted attention, and sometimes, understandably, resentment. He seems to have made a fundamental decision to use

his talents "within the system", manipulating it to his own ends. He has the reputation for being a "con man", a "wheeler-deeler", able to talk himself into, or out of anything.

His physical appearance and demeanor match his style and lend credence to it. He is tall and husky, with a deep resonant voice. His speech is always carefully articulated. His appearance and his easy "rap" also serve to hide another side. A more lonely, unsure side.

> I am trying to prepare myself for the world. But I found it hard to find someone mature enough and interested enough in me to rap with. There are a lot of problems I have and are going to have to deal with and it would be nice to get someone who liked me enough to help me deal with them.

Given this background, his disappointment is understandable in finding that the prestige and status he thought were associated with ACE students didn't exist. He feels that the Academy has let him down, and he is very bitter about it, writing in his journal:

> I feel by dealing with the faculty of the Academy I am ready to deal with lying slick employers. Because there are quite a few in the Academy.

The roots of Harold's frustration are deep and complex. Most of the staff feel that he is college material. He is bright, "especially good at writing", and articulate. He likes to write and wants to be a journalist. Most of the staff feel that this career goal is realistic, if he can get over his indecision. This is seen as his one major problem. He resents being pressured into things he doesn't want to do, and handles his frustrations by blaming the "system."

His negative attitude toward the program includes the clusters, although he does see some positive benefit accruing from the experiences:

> I feel experiences in and out of clusters gives me the necessary experience for the different situations I will be encountering in the near future.

Although extremely critical of the ARC, he enjoys English because it entails mostly writing. His teacher says:

> He's talented and confident. He's intelligent but has an inflated ego. He doesn't work to his fullest potential. ...he won't do what he doesn't want. He's independent. The ACE was not necessarily instrumental in his success, he would have made it anywhere. But he stayed and battled out his dissatisfaction. He likes me.

His criticisms are many, and include not enough teachers and difficult books. He feels that the math teacher is unfair because a friend gets better grades than he does for the same work. He claims the teacher grades on the basis of whom he likes.

The counselors who have contact with him feel that he "tends to focus on appearance." He wants recognition more than the satisfaction of accomplishment. He tries to be slick with his own rationale for doing things. They were astounded when he complained that no one called to check on him while on a specialization. He frequently disappoints staff by "not coming through."

In guidance class he was sullen and withdrawn until given a position of leadership. Then he opened up. The counselor's biggest disappointment came with Harold's decision to join the navy, where he would train to be a recruiting officer. Despite his two years in the ACE program, he made the decision to enlist without seeking advice and told the staff when it was already decided. They had previously thought he was set to go to college and get directly into journalism. He still wants to be a journalist and sees the Navy jaunt as a temporary sidetrip, helping escape some tough life decisions.

> What I am striving for in life is to become a successful journalist. To be in a position to influence other people. There is one thing that I can guarantee before I leave the earth; I will leave my effect upon the world.

Harold claims that the ACE benefited him in a negative way. It taught him that adults in the "working world" cannot be trusted. The abuse of power, the lack of interest, and the disappointments common in the "real world" were revealed to him through the school. He feels that he has learned what to expect "out there."

# CHAPTER 8

# CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions presented here represent an attempt to distill and interpret a wealth of data in the formulation of answers to the questions posed in Chapter 3. They are offered with the following caveats which should be kept in mind as the conclusions are considered.

First, they are not presented as final and definitive. Like the findings of any ethnographic investigation, they must be considered as more or less refined hypotheses. They are the best hypotheses we can come up with, given our past experiences and the data (observed behaviors) we have to work with. While fairly confident of their basic accuracy, we recognize that additional data or the application of a different analytical framework might result in their modification or refinement.

Second, we have deliberately tried to present the ACE as seen through the eyes of students. Students predictably are negative in their reaction to school experiences. Indeed, the "student bitch" appears to be a universal attribute of the role. This is not to imply that their negative feelings should be taken lightly. To the contrary, students are usually insightful. Their complaints are real and are indicative of the problem areas. Such data must be seriously reckoned with. However, negative student reaction cannot, in itself, be taken at face value as evidence of program failure. In our conclusions we have tried to balance strongly negative feelings when we felt they presented a seriously skewed picture. For the most part, however, we depend on the reader to recognize this bias and to interpret the findings accordingly.

Finally, the conclusions have been presented in skeletal form, with no attempt to discuss them in depth. The case studies presented in Chapter 7 are illustrative of the data base from which they are drawn and serve to flesh out the skeleton. They speak more elegantly than any third person narrative possibly could.

## What Is It Like To Be A Student In The ACE?

There are three important reasons for answering this question: to ascertain if the experiences of ACE students

are significantly more rewarding than those of students in other schools; to identify variables contributing to program successes or shortcomings; and to discover what populations are best served by the program.

Since student personalities vary on important dimensions there can be no simple answer to the question. Student reaction depends on the kind of student. However, our investigation has revealed a number of perceptions and experiences shared by a significant majority. These can be viewed as clustering around five student concerns: the unstructured nature of the program; the emphasis on individualization; the program's role in making career choices; its status as an instrumentality or locus of social identity; and the status of the program in relation to Olney High School.

## Freedom and Structure

The generally unstructured design of the program, compounded with the problems of integration and communication discussed earlier, present either a serious challenge or an exploitable opportunity to students. Students who find the program to their liking tend to be individuals who are strongly self-motivated, who feel good about themselves, or who are aggressive, as well as those who tend to be lazy. Success rests not so much with manipulating and subverting a system, as with developing personal relationships with individuals. This favors students who have developed good strategies for interpersonal relations.

On the other hand, the lack of formal structure can be frustrating and problematical for students who are timid or insecure. It can be boring and unchallenging for those who come from highly structured and demanding junior high schools.

## Individualization

The program emphasis on individualized pacing, while touted by program developers as one of the most appealing features of the program, leads to a sense of isolation for certain kinds of students--an isolation as frustrating as the anonymity they are escaping in their home school. Problems of scheduling and communication have the effect of keeping students from forming informal cliques or groups that have permanence. For some this is no problem. The advantages of being able to work at one's own pace and to be judged on the basis of one's own potential far

outweigh the disadvantage of isolation. These latter students are generally those who are self-motivated, goal directed, and gregarious enough to find outside of the school the peer support they need.

However, the problem of perceived isolation emerges as a serious concern of a majority of the students sampled.

## Making Career Choices

While one of the ostensible rationales of the ACE is to enhance the realism of students' career choices and to give them the tools needed to make a more effective entry into the job market, most students were not attracted to the program because of these factors. Their motivation was much more immediate. Most students find the community-based part of the program the most interesting and the most rewarding. However, most do not see the program as a place to actually make their career choices. Instead, the program contribution is one of creating in students an awareness of the kind of world that awaits them, in giving them some of the information they will need when career decisions are actually called for, and in providing direction so they can acquire the skills they will eventually need.

## The Program as Instrumentality or Locus of Social Identity

"High school student" is a label of social identity in American society. Most students are not enrolled in high school because they specifically want to get something out of it. It is not simply an instrumentality to them. They are there because, at their particular juncture in life, that is what is expected of them. The ACE, as it has evolved, serves as an "adjunct" to a student's high school. It does not offer the kind of total support afforded by a traditional high school. Students never give the impression that the Academy serves as a surrogate family.

This is a cause of concern for some, especially second year students who were involved in the program when it was housed off-campus. They resent being treated as regular CHS students. However, for students with the maturity and security to view the program as an instrumentality, (i.e., something from which to take what they need, not expecting expect it to offer what it doesn't have) participation can be gratifying.

Program Status with Respect to OHS

The ACE is viewed by some as a kind of "elite" experiment and participation in the Academy as is a move up from OHS. For others, it is more of a remedial program, serving to meet the needs of students who for some reason cannot make it in the public school. Among the staff, the lines seem to be drawn between the ARC and the counseling center, with counselors holding the former view and instructors tending toward the latter.

The presence of these two points of view can create problems for students. If students are led to believe that the program is "second rate", they may be reluctant to continue in it, for fear that it will jeopardize their chances of getting into college. On the other hand, should students hold to the "elitist" model, they risk cutting themselves off from friends in OHS and an important source of personal support not available in the ACE.

Program practices tend to be ambiguous in the messages they convey. On the one hand, success depends on self-motivation, maturity, and personal security--qualities of "good" students. On the other, the perceived laxness of academic standards and the emphasis on non-academic subjects suggest to students that the program is not quite as prestigious as OHS.

## How Do Students Change In Response To The Program?

Again, due to the variation of student personalities and the idiosyncratic nature of their programs, this question can only be answered by identifying a few general trends. Given the absence of adequate controls, drawing one-to-one correlations between student change and program effect is difficult. Most of our conclusions are, of necessity, based upon student perceptions of their own changes.

Many students have indicated that they have changed in the following five areas: knowledge of careers; knowledge of the city; self reliance; basic skills; and knowing what they want to do with next stages in their lives.

## Knowledge of Careers

Students are almost unanimous in claiming that the explorations and/or specializations they have had have taught them a good deal about different careers and jobs. While the depth of this knowledge is problematical in many cases, the fact that their awareness has been enlarged cannot be disputed.

Students are in no position to know the extensiveness of their career knowledge, or more significantly, what of importance they might not have learned about a particular career. Our investigations suggest that in many cases, some of the most important information, such as the particular ambience of a job, is not picked up. This is due in part to the lack of real hands-on experiences. Furthermore, since there is no formal mechanism for immediate discussion of exploration experiences among the group, a number of insights that could be developed are lost.

Nevertheless, on balance, increasing career awareness and knowledge about jobs is one of the consistently met goals of the program.

## Knowledge of the City

An important spin-off of the experiential aspect of the program is the increased knowledge of the city. Students have learned how to use the public transportation system, how to interact with representatives of other races and social classes, and a host of other skills.

## Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is considered to be one of the attributes contributing to success in the program, as indeed it is. Perhaps because of this, students feel that both the employer-site experiences and the ARC experiences have greatly increased their self-reliance. This is a function of being encouraged to interact with the counselors as adults, as well as being forced to motivate themselves in the basic skills classes and to get to employer sites on their own. Many have never before had a chance to interact with adults as equals, on a first name basis and without the traditional buffers that always remind them of their status as students, or worse, as children.

## Basic Skills

Students are not in a position to assess accurately their progress in basic skills. However, this is the one area in which they feel they make the least progress. Several have indicated that the academic work is simply a rehash of what they had in junior high school. Students who are self-motivated are obviously going to make better progress than others, given the lack of pressure. However, contrary to expectations, students who need individual attention and help will probably do no better in the ACE than they would have in a more traditional classroom. Classes seem too large for any but the most aggressive to get significant individual aid.

## Knowing What They Want To Do

While a number of students have indicated that they appreciate the program because it has taught them to analyze themselves and has increased their knowledge about life options, others give little evidence of being able to apply this information. If the sample of students used for the case studies is representative, there is little evidence that the program has been instrumental in actually changing the career goals of most students. It has served to affirm goals, has opened new possibilities, and has shown ways of getting to predetermined places. As indicated above, the program is not primarily a place for making career decisions, but rather for acquiring the wherewithal to make those decisions.

# How Does The Actual Program Differ From The Paper Program?

A complete answer to this question would involve a point by point comparison of the program described in this report with the original design of the ACE. Such a comparison is impossible for us to make. In lieu of this, several trends or processes we have observed that will inevitably lead to divergence or congruence are discussed briefly.

## Use of Materials

The program envisioned a fairly rigorous use of the Carkuff Associates career guidance materials. However, due to the lack of adequate facilities for teaching and

in response to immediate student needs and the perceived abstractness of the materials, the format for guidance classes has shifted greatly. The Carkuff materials are now used as resources and provide a general framework within which counselor's plan their lessons.

A problem exists in the ARC for students who have progressed beyond the ILA program. Theoretically, with the help of an instructor, students will put together a carefully planned program of study which they will contract to follow until their objectives have been reached. In fact, those students who have progressed beyond the ILA frequently either do nothing or simply sit and read.

With respect to the ILA itself, a student presumably has to satisfy fairly rigid requirements in order to complete the program. In fact, these requirements may be waived if it is felt that meeting them would unnecessarily penalize a student.

Ad Hoc Decision-Making

In the absence of an operational administrative model and the concomitant specification of lines of responsibility, there is a tendency for decisions to be made in an ad hoc fashion by lower level staff. While this is inevitable in an experimental program, and gives the program a certain sense of flexibility and responsiveness, it does lead to the adoption of procedures not projected in the original design. The process is accentuated by the lack of effective communication among staff of the various components of the program.

While staff in the ACE do not have a program design that they can use as a "Bible", or appeal to as a final resort, there is precedent for most decisions that have to be made. When decisions are called for, staff feel confident to make them with the underlying principle being, "keep the interests of students foremost." The staff can act in confidence for the most part, knowing that they will have the support of the administrative head if the action is ever questioned.

This administrative model lends itself to flexibility but places a great deal of responsibility upon the lower level staff. It can only work smoothly where there are adequate mechanisms for communication between all administrative units and program components. Several planned program features which would have increased communication--regular staff meetings involving instructors as well as counselors, and the central record file, for example--were never implemented.

## What Are The Operational Standards For Success In The Program?

The tremendous variation of staff styles precludes the possibility of answering this question simply. However, several general observations suggest themselves from the case studies data and the program description.

### Personal Relationships

Given the lack of structure in the program and the power individuals have to plan, direct and evaluate student programs, establishing good relationships is important. Thus, skill in interpersonal relations becomes a de facto basis for success. A student with a good "rap", who is friendly and not obnoxious, and who can make people believe in him has a good chance for success.

### Attendance

Another important criterion for success is attendance. This is one behavior that can easily be measured objectively and theoretically correlates with interest and motivation. It is, furthermore, one of the informal criteria considered most important in selection into the program.

### Responsibility

In the course of the anthropoligical investigation, it was discovered that virtually all staff consider evidence of responsibility as one of the most important criteria for judging a student. While definitions of responsibility vary, they generally include keeping appointments, cooperating with employers, getting work done and in on time, and following through on promises. Perhaps as an inevitable result of the personal, one-to-one relationships they try to develop, staff feel personally betrayed if students let them down.

### Summary

In the final analysis, success in the program revolves pretty much around students' desire to stay in it. They do not have to struggle to stay in, and must be flagrantly uncooperative to be dropped. As long as they can convince the staff they they are profiting from the program and are not disruptive, students are encouraged to stay.

The more important question of what the program considers the characteristics of a success--what impact it hopes to have on students--is much more difficult to assess. At least it appears that the ACE, in contra-distinction to many schools, genuinely exists for students, not for staff or administrators.